

STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2017

HEARINGS BEFORE A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS SECOND SESSION

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PART 4 WRITTEN TESTIMONY FROM OUTSIDE WITNESSES



Printed for the use of the Committee on Appropriations

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

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**TESTIMONY OF HOWARD A. KOHR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE (AIPAC), TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON
STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND RELATED PROGRAMS**

March 2016

For decades, Israel's survival and security has been a top U.S. national security priority. Today, Israel faces an unprecedented array of threats stemming from the growing instability gripping the Middle East. These challenges require Israel to spend significantly more on its defense. In this context, AIPAC strongly urges the Subcommittee to approve the president's request of \$3.1 billion in security assistance for the Jewish state in fiscal year 2017 in accordance with the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the United States and Israel. The approval of this assistance should include the legislatively mandated terms under which it has historically been provided, particularly provisions mandating the level of assistance, offshore procurement and early disbursement. As the current MOU expires after FY2018, discussions between the two allies are underway to renew and expand the terms of the next agreement. U.S. security assistance is the most tangible manifestation of American support for Israel, especially during a time of tremendous turmoil in the Middle East. By providing security assistance to Israel, the United States safeguards the Jewish state's qualitative military edge (QME) over its adversaries and ensures the safety and security of both nations. In addition, we support a robust and bipartisan foreign aid program that ensures America's strong leadership position in the world.

A Region in Turmoil

On Israel's doorstep, the Middle East continues to face unprecedented chaos. Along the Jewish state's northern border, terrorist groups including Hezbollah, the Islamic State, and Jabhat al-Nusra are gaining strength; in the south, Hamas remains in firm control of Gaza and terrorists roam the Sinai Peninsula; and to the east, Iran has received more than \$100 billion in sanctions relief that will further fuel its support for terrorism and insurgency. According to the State Department, Iran remains the leading state sponsor of terrorism – financing, arming, and training terrorist groups in the Middle East and around the world.

In July 2015, Iran and the P5+1 finalized the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a nuclear accord that – if fully implemented – will limit Tehran's nuclear program for 10-15 years in exchange for sanctions relief. Since the nuclear deal was concluded, Iran has significantly stepped up its destabilizing activities, including providing more material and logistical support to Syrian dictator Bashar al Assad, more money and arms to Hezbollah, more support for its allies in Iraq, Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen and Bahrain, and more ballistic missile tests in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. Meanwhile, Israel faces a Palestinian wave of terror. Since Oct. 2015, scores of terrorist attacks have killed at least 30 Israelis and wounded over 300. The recent surge in violence and incitement has further pushed back the prospects for peace. Additionally, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has continued to bypass direct negotiations with Israel to pursue one-sided initiatives at the U.N. Security Council and International Criminal Court.

In the Gaza Strip, Hamas—a designated terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union—poses both an immediate and a longer-term threat to Israeli citizens. The group is constructing an enormous infrastructure with which to attack Israeli communities, including a broad network of terror tunnels paid for in part with funds diverted from international humanitarian assistance. At the same time, six million Israelis are now within range of an estimated 10,000 Hamas rockets.

On the Jewish state's northeast border, Syria's enduring conflict continues to pose severe challenges to Israel's security. Rebel militias and radical jihadi groups affiliated with the Islamic State, al-Qaida and Jabhat al Nusra have replaced the Syrian army near Israel's border. While these groups are now preoccupied with fighting each other, Israeli security planners are concerned that they will ultimately turn south to attack Israel. And Iran's Revolutionary Guards have made no secret of the fact that they seek to directly threaten Israel. Also situated along Israel's northern border, Hezbollah dominates the Lebanese government and has amassed 150,000 rockets and missiles, more sophisticated and accurate than ever before, with some able to hit targets anywhere in Israel. Designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the United States since 1995, Hezbollah has killed more Americans than any terrorist group other than al-Qaida.

These represent only some of the many threats gripping the region. They illustrate one simple truth: the Jewish state, as America's one stable ally in an increasingly tumultuous region, faces unprecedented strategic threats on all its fronts.

Israel: A Vital Strategic Partner

As a key pillar of America's Middle East security framework, the U.S.-Israel strategic partnership plays an indispensable role in combating common threats and furthering America's regional and global policy objectives. These threats include terrorism, conventional and non-conventional weapons proliferation, counterfeiting, cyber warfare, and the spread of radical Islamist ideology. In this context, Israel's military strength and central geo-strategic location provide a strong deterrent to regional actors opposed to the United States. Indeed, Israel's stable, democratic and reliably pro-U.S. orientation remains unquestioned and ensures that America can consistently rely on its alliance with the Jewish state. Put differently, the historic U.S.-Israel alliance is among the only stabilizing features of a very unstable and unpredictable region.

The close strategic relationship between the United States and Israel originated with the two allies sharing key intelligence around the time of the 1967 Six-Day War. This partnership was later broadened and formalized in the early 1980s, when President Ronald Reagan and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir announced the establishment of the Joint Political Military Group to coordinate planning, exercises, and prepositioning against threats faced by both nations in the Middle East. Later in the decade, the United States designated Israel as a major non-NATO ally. Israel is now also a Major Strategic Partner of the United States after enactment of the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014.

Over the last 30 years, the U.S.-Israel relationship has benefitted both countries through joint military training programs and joint research and development. Facing common threats, the U.S. and Israel can optimize the response to these threats by working closely together. Twice each year, U.S. Marines conduct desert warfare training with their Israel Defense Forces (IDF) counterparts, and American soldiers and security officials have visited Israel to study Israel's approach to urban combat. U.S. pilots hold mock dogfights with the Israeli Air Force and have tested aerial combat tactics and practiced refueling. In addition, Israel and the United States have cooperated on a wide range of intelligence-sharing programs, including monitoring Iran, Syria, al-Qaida and other terrorist groups.

An additional centerpiece of the interaction between the two militaries has been combined missile defense training, including the biannual Juniper Cobra exercise. In this maneuver, U.S. and Israeli forces practice cooperative tactics to counter the growing threat from ballistic missiles and long-range rockets. In 2012, this drill was combined with Austere Challenge, the largest joint bilateral military exercise ever conducted between the two forces. In Nov. 2013, the United States, Italy and Greece joined Israel for the Juniper Stallion exercise – the largest military air exercise in Israel's history. Just this year, 1,700 Americans from all U.S. services and 2,000 Israeli personnel were engaged in this year's Juniper Cobra exercise.

U.S. Assistance Helps Maintain Israel's Qualitative Military Edge

U.S. support for Israel through annual security aid has helped the Jewish state maintain its Qualitative Military Edge (QME), which Congress has defined in legislation as Israel's "ability to counter and defeat any credible conventional military threat from any individual state or possible coalition of states or from non-state actors." This military superiority has prevented war by deterring Arab states from considering attacks on Israel. Because of America's support for Israel's QME, prospective aggressors know they would face a U.S.-backed ally armed with the world's most advanced weapon systems. U.S. security assistance has encouraged Israel's neighbors to come to the negotiating table, thus playing a key role in securing Israel's peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt. Today, both the United States and Israel share a commitment to advancing a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Cooperation Produces Critical New Military and Defense Technologies

With America's help, Israel is about to launch one of the most advanced multi-tiered missile defense systems in the world.

Iron Dome: Since 2005, terrorists in Gaza have fired more than 10,000 rockets indiscriminately into Israel, prompting the Jewish state to develop the Iron Dome rocket defense system. This defensive platform has proved its ability to intercept incoming Katyusha-style rockets in mid-air, saving lives and avoiding broader conflict. Recognizing its value, America has already provided \$1.1 billion to help Israel develop and purchase the system.

David's Sling: On March 1, the United States and Israel began delivering major components of the jointly-produced David's Sling missile defense system to the Israeli Air Force. Developed by

U.S. defense company Raytheon and Israel's Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd., David's Sling can intercept short- to medium-range rockets and ballistic missiles, including guided projectiles, cruise missiles, aircraft, and drones. The system passed its final series of tests in Dec. 2015 and will be fully operational in early 2016.

Arrow 2 and 3: The Arrow program is the centerpiece of the U.S.-Israeli cooperative defense relationship. Jointly developed by the two allies, Arrow-2 is among the world's most sophisticated missile shields. Operational since 2000, Arrow-2 has consistently proven that one missile can shoot down another at high altitudes and supersonic speeds. Arrow-3, an upper-tier, exo-atmospheric defense system, is designed to counter long-range conventional and unconventional strategic threats to Israel. It is currently in development and is expected to be operational in 2016.

During the 2014 conflict between Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian terror group utilized underground tunnels to attack Israel's civilian population. Currently, Hamas is rebuilding and expanding its tunnel infrastructure in Gaza, and Hezbollah may be preparing to replicate this approach on Israel's border with Lebanon. Israel, with U.S. help, is developing a response to this tunnel threat. Israeli success in this endeavor would quickly translate into assistance to our own efforts to thwart similar threats on the Korean Peninsula, the United States-Mexico border and in various locations in the Middle East

Saving American Lives on the Battlefield

Israel has also developed dramatic new technologies that have played a key role in saving U.S. lives during military conflicts. To cite just a few of the more important innovations:

F-35 Helmet: An Israeli defense contractor partnered with an American firm to produce the Helmet Mounted Display System (HMDS) for F-35 fighter pilots. The helmet displays flight and weapons data for the pilot, providing full situational awareness and the ability to rotate the missiles' seeker by turning one's head.

Litening Pod: The Israeli-developed Litening Pod for strike aircraft identifies targets with laser precision from high altitudes, placing the pilot in less danger while reducing collateral damage on the ground.

Distance Door-Breaching System: U.S. forces must often apprehend enemy combatants and terrorists who are holed up in urban safe houses. Breaching the doors of these houses can be a deadly proposition when troops come face to face with armed insurgents. The Israeli SIMON door-breaching system can blast down steel or wooden doors from a distance of up to 130 feet.

Advanced Detection of Explosives: Remote-controlled explosive devices have caused thousands of U.S. casualties in recent years. The U.S. military uses various Israeli technologies that can detect remote-controlled explosive devices and other weapons.

Emergency Bandage: Carried in every U.S. soldier's first-aid kit, this Israeli-designed bandage stems blood loss, prevents infection and allows non-medically trained soldiers to stabilize wounded. This bandage was instrumental in saving the life of former congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and several others in the aftermath of a 2011 shooting in Tucson, Arizona.

Increased Israeli Defense Spending

Spiraling defense costs are forcing Israel to spend more on defense as a percentage of GDP than any other nation in the industrialized world. Israel officially allocates 5.6 percent of its GDP to defense. However, the actual costs to the Israeli economy are much higher, taking into account lost productivity and the need for reserve duty, internal security and anti-terrorism spending. Even as the Jewish state faces its own substantial budgetary pressures, during the next decade Israel may have to spend \$160 billion on defense. This is a significant increase over the previous 10-year period. Israel's spending coincides with accelerated military investment fueled by the oil revenues of Israel's Arab and Iranian neighbors. Saudi Arabia's military budget doubled over the last decade, while Iran's rate of military spending has grown at a similar pace despite economic pressures. This is reflected in the major purchases and development of new arms that may put Israel at risk. Other Arab nations have also made large-scale purchases of weapons and military technology. Iran continues funding Hezbollah's military expansion. The military hardware – including American-built advanced fighter aircraft, vertical-takeoff aircraft, naval vessels and armored troop carriers – that Israel must acquire over the next decade to maintain its QME is far more sophisticated, complex and expensive than previous Israeli purchases from the United States.

A Robust Foreign Aid Budget Is Critical to U.S. National Security

AIPAC strongly believes that the broader U.S. foreign aid budget, which includes security assistance to Israel—nearly 75 percent of which comes right back to the United States through the purchase of U.S.-made aircraft and other equipment—is an essential component of America's national security strategy. In today's globalized economy, U.S. foreign aid also helps American companies develop foreign markets, build stable business environments in developing countries, and thereby help create jobs at home. Foreign aid programs also help bring education, health care and transportation to hundreds of millions of potential new customers. Today, one in five American jobs is linked to U.S. exports. Foreign markets offer the best opportunities to expand the American economy. At little more than one percent of the federal budget, foreign aid is a cost-effective and relatively small investment that saves U.S. taxpayers money. Using foreign aid dollars wisely today helps prevent the more costly wars and crises that might otherwise occur. Prevention – whether of terror attacks, weapons proliferation, pandemic disease, economic meltdown, societal collapse or the spread of radical ideology – is always cheaper and easier.

Conclusion

Few can predict what the coming year will bring in the Middle East, but one thing remains certain: The United States is strong when Israel is strong. This Subcommittee – headed so ably by Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Lowey – deserves great credit for its stalwart

advocacy for the U.S.-Israel relationship and the foreign aid budget over the years. This support will remain even more critical as America and Israel continue to work together to advance the goals of a peaceful, stable and pro-Western Middle East.

**Testimony of Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo, President and CEO,
Catholic Relief Services
Regarding Appropriations Requests for Fiscal Year 2017
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs**

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, as Catholic Relief Services (CRS) addresses the many affronts to human dignity across the globe, we are reminded of the importance of U.S. leadership. The United States sets the tone and tenor among governments around the globe for the role of civil society, the response to refugees, and the long-term efforts to establish safety and opportunity. CRS appreciates your critical efforts to ensure this leadership through robust funding for programs to reduce poverty and save lives. Herein CRS and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) provide our requests for FY 2017 appropriations in the State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs subcommittee:

Appropriations Account Title (\$ in thousands) (OCO included)	Agency	USCCB/CRS Request
Maternal and Child Health	USAID	\$814,500
Nutrition	USAID	\$230,000
Vulnerable Children	USAID	\$30,000
HIV/AIDS (USAID)	USAID	\$330,000
Malaria, TB, Global Health Security & NTDs	USAID	\$1,095,000
HIV/AIDS	DOS/OGAC	\$5,670,000
Development Assistance	USAID	\$3,100,000
International Disaster Assistance	USAID	\$2,794,184
Migration and Refugee Assistance	DOS/PRM	\$3,600,000
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	DOS/PRM	\$100,000
Complex Crises Fund	USAID	\$50,000
Millennium Challenge Account	MCC	\$1,000,000
Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	DOS	\$2,394,930
Peacekeeping Operations	DOS	\$475,391
Mechanism for Peace Operations Response	DOS	\$150,000
Green Climate Fund	DOS	\$750,000
Combatting Trafficking in Persons	DOS	\$56,000

Created to carry out the USCCB's commitment to assist the poor and vulnerable overseas, CRS is proud to partner with the U.S. government to bring opportunity and safety to millions of people every year, often in the world's most dangerous places. We are one of the largest implementers of U.S. funded foreign assistance, reaching millions of poor and vulnerable people in over 100 countries. CRS works with people and communities based on need, without regard to race, creed, or nationality. We are a member of and access the Catholic Church's global

network of Caritas agencies. Like many faith-based organizations, CRS is also trusted by beneficiaries because we work with trusted local partners (often church leaders and institutions), have demonstrated our commitment to their well-being, are sensitive to local customs and cultures, and build the capacity of the local community to implement the work itself. Because of this trust, we can coordinate with a broad spectrum of actors, including local governments, beneficiaries, businesses and other stakeholders. A certain independence from governments enables that trust. Efforts to require NGOs to share beneficiary information; personal information about staff (e.g., the Partner Vetting System (PVS)); or details about conflicts violate that trust. Consequently, they impact our abilities to operate effectively and put our staff at risk. We urge the U.S. government to protect the roles of non-governmental organizations as independent partners, recognizing too that the U.S. government's stance towards civil society will be imitated by other governments.

This testimony will highlight the USCCB and CRS' appropriations requests in five areas: 1) humanitarian assistance; 2) conflict management; 3) global health, especially Malaria and Nutrition; 4) providing safety and opportunity in Central America; and 5) climate change.

Humanitarian assistance The number of people affected by humanitarian crises today is staggering. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates the total number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) has surpassed 60 million. Those fleeing to Europe routinely make headlines, but millions more are being housed by less-developed countries: including 268,352 refugees from South Sudan; 461,607 from the Central African Republic; and 253,294 from Burundi. In addition to the heart-rending conflicts spurring flight, climate change and natural disasters are also creating significant humanitarian needs. El Nino is responsible for one of the worst droughts on record in parts of Eastern and Southern Africa. Parts of Ethiopia have seen complete crop failure and no rain for over a year. CRS is serving about a quarter of the 10 million Ethiopians currently receiving emergency food aid in Ethiopia. It is projected that up to another 15 million people in Southern Africa will be food insecure by September 2016. The U.S. government will need to use a combination of emergency food assistance, both in the form of U.S. commodities and local purchase, to respond. And it is quite possible that La Nina will create additional devastation later this year.

With sorrow, we acknowledge that last week marked the conclusion of five years of conflict in Syria. CRS has served more than one million Syrians, in partnership with many courageous women religious, local Caritas agencies, and Syrian refugee volunteers. We do so with profound respect for the generosity of Syria's neighbors. In the fall of 2015, our partnerships with the local Caritas agencies enabled us to respond with agility and speed, using private funds, to serve the tens of thousands of Syrian, Afghan, and other refugees fleeing to Europe. As their routes to safety and needs change through the seasons and political uncertainties, we continue to flexibly serve their needs. Yet with the recent deal reached between the European Union (EU) and Turkey, we are concerned about refugees' freedom of movement and access to protection.

The agreement reached between the EU and Turkey is commendable for its attempt to ensure that more individuals have access to asylum without having to risk crossing the dangerous Aegean Sea. Many of the 60,000 asylum-seekers currently in Greece likely have legitimate

claims for international protection and asylum. Women and children comprise over 60% of this population. We join a chorus of other organizations who are concerned that the refugee camps on the mainland will effectively become detention centers, precluding us from providing critical assistance. We urge you to work with the EU to ensure freedom of movement and humanitarian access to these camps. We also urge you to find a way to ensure that Afghans in Greece have access to adequate international protection; they constitute upwards of 20,000 of the asylum-seekers there but are not currently eligible for the relocation program. Finally, we implore you to ensure that asylum-seekers are not involuntarily returned to their countries of origin.

More than half of Syrian refugees are children. UNICEF reports that 2.8 million Syrian children are out of school. And they have witnessed horrific atrocities. Among our many emergency response initiatives to respond to Syrians affected by the crisis, CRS has particularly focused on formal and informal education, and trauma-healing of children. In child-friendly spaces, children draw photos of bombs and dismembered bodies. CRS' use of film, puppetry and dialogue to address trauma has been shown to reduce fear and aggression amongst children and provided teachers and animators with skills to improve learning outcomes. Unless the international community invests heavily in these children and youth, an entire generation of Syria's children could be lost. This is not only morally unacceptable, but also could negatively reverberate across the region and globe.

CRS appreciates the Administration's leadership in hosting a high-level refugee summit around the U.N. General Assembly this year. Congress' robust funding of humanitarian accounts in recent years enables the U.S. to credibly lead such an effort. We urge you to once again increase that funding, providing \$3.6 billion for Migration and Refugee Assistance and nearly \$2.8 billion for International Disaster Assistance. CRS is concerned about the significant amount of funding requested by the Administration through Overseas Contingency Operations for these accounts, and we urge you to restore base funding. We also request you to seek ways to maximize the efficiency of these funds, in part by increasing the speed with which the U.S. government assists refugees and asylum-seekers.

Finally, we urge Congress to support the Administration to resettle our fair share of vulnerable Syrians into the United States: our vetting process is the strongest in the world.

Conflict management In places like Central African Republic and South Sudan, CRS partners with the local church in peacebuilding efforts. Since 2014, we have reached more than 300,000 Catholic, Protestant and Muslim faith leaders, including women and young people, as part of a civic dialogue in Central African Republic. Yet humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding efforts would be impossible without United Nations or regional peacekeepers. We urge you to support the Administration's entire request for peacekeeping, including the Peace Operations Response Mechanism. These same fragile countries that require peacekeeping troops need U.S. strategies and funding to prevent the descent into conflict and to halt violence, negotiate ceasefires and rebuild vibrant governments, private sectors and civil societies; we therefore urge you to fund the Complex Crises Fund.

Global health programs CRS and the USCCB support the global health programs enumerated in the chart above. In particular, we urge Congress and the Administration to seek ways to strengthen health systems globally. As the Ebola outbreak demonstrated, weak health systems in other parts of the world that are unable to withstand shocks can lead to needless death and suffering and could quickly impact us here. For this reason, CRS supports the Global Health Security account; we work in partnership with the Global Health Security Agenda in Mali and Guinea-Bissau to address antimicrobial resistance, biosecurity and biosafety and to strengthen community disease surveillance.

In the end, Ebola took over 11,000 lives, robbed over 23,000 children of a parent or caregiver, wiped out health gains and plunged millions more people in West Africa into abject poverty. Ebola also indirectly caused a significant increase in deaths from malaria, as sick people avoided health clinics for fear of catching Ebola. More than 3 billion people globally are at risk of being infected with malaria, and pregnant women and young children are the most vulnerable. In 2015, 305,000 African children died of malaria before turning five years old. Yet this is a preventable disease. With our local church partners, CRS works to train communities to keep their homes free of standing water and to provide long-lasting, insecticide-treated mosquito nets to more than 17.5 million people. We also deliver medicine to young children in high-risk areas. We support the President's request for malaria.

Poor nutrition is the underlying cause of 45 percent of deaths of children under five years old worldwide. Poor nutrition also leads to stunting, which causes significant and permanent mental and physical impairment, especially when malnutrition strikes early in life. Malnutrition stymies economic development and keeps families and societies locked in poverty. Investments in nutrition save lives, create more potential for prosperity, and reduce health challenges in developing countries. Investments in nutrition from pregnancy to a child's second birthday can boost a country's GDP by as much as 11% annually, and increase individual earning capacity by up to 46% over a lifetime. CRS works with local partners to alleviate childhood malnutrition with low-cost interventions addressing inadequate feeding practices and exposure to illnesses. Some of these services include breastfeeding support for mothers, growth monitoring for children, training on proper food preparation and storage, and managing chronic illnesses. We urge Congress to expand funding for nutrition in the global health budget to \$230 million.

Central America CRS believes that children are part of the solution to the crisis in Central America. "Just give us a chance," they say. Our successful youth workforce program, modeled on Youthbuilders, is being scaled up throughout the region. Our Food for Education program in Honduras, which improved educational outcomes and attendance in Intibucá province is now being replicated across the country at the request of the Government of Honduras. And our public-private partnerships to establish cooperatives among small-scale farmers and link them to markets is now being applied to cocoa in El Salvador. As many as 10,000 farmers devastated by climate change's impact on coffee will have a reliable alternative crop through this program.

CRS and USCCB applaud the provisions in the FY 2016 omnibus requiring each northern triangle government to ensure that an independent, autonomous Board oversees funding to the central governments; and that governments involve affected populations in the design,

implementation and evaluation of programs affecting them. We urge Congress and the Administration to press the governments to ensure that these Boards play a meaningful role and are comprised of a wide variety of non-governmental actors, including academics, non-profit social service agencies, think tanks, foundations, and faith-based organizations.

We also request that Congress and the Administration to make public, to civil society in the United States and the northern triangle, the benchmarks and indicators used to measure successes in each country. We appreciate the efforts of Congress and the Administration, including USAID, to ensure that programs and funds are focused on the most marginalized and needy communities, such as the Western Highlands of Guatemala.

The United States relies on partnership with the Government of Mexico to respond to these fleeing children and youth. The Southern Border Program has exported to Mexico a policy of enforcement and deterrence; we urge you to focus on exporting protection and due process. The many courageous Catholic organizations responding to these asylum-seekers stress that the increased enforcement has pushed children and youth further underground and increased the risks of the trek. We urge you to provide financial and technical assistance to the government of Mexico's National System for the Holistic Development of the Family (DIF) to accept custody of unaccompanied children; ensure their best interests are evaluated; and ensure protection needs are assessed and met. We also urge you to ensure the Mexican Commission for Aid to Refugees meaningfully implements best practices for the identification and treatment of asylum seekers and victims of trafficking. Finally, we urge Congress to work with the Administration to scale up the number of refugees processed through UNHCR and the Central American unaccompanied minors program.

Climate Change In his Encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis calls us all to a renewed and authentic stewardship of the resources God has entrusted to us. CRS and USCCB view the Green Climate Fund as an important step to answering this moral call, particularly because climate change disproportionately affects the poor. We especially support the Green Climate Fund's emphasis on adaptation and on least developed and other highly vulnerable countries. CRS applauds the recent release of FY 2016 money for the Fund, and we urge you to ensure that the FY 2017 commitment is met.

CRS has leveraged US funding to support projects that have significant climate change adaptation benefits. For example, we implement multi-sectoral projects in places like Malawi, Ethiopia, and Madagascar. The primary goal of these projects is to improve food security, but they include measures such as watershed restoration, use of green manure cover crops, disaster risk reduction interventions, and the introduction of drought resistance seeds. Together, these kinds of interventions are allowing farmers to withstand the more variable rain patterns, longer periods of drought, and more intense storms. Some of these methods also greatly increase the carbon in the soil poor farmers are using, thus improving farm productivity and sequestering more carbon than the land otherwise would. We asked a beneficiary in Ethiopia what the project meant to her; she replied, "None of my children died this year."

FISCAL YEAR 2017 TESTIMONY

ARMENIAN ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA

SUBMITTED BY BRYAN ARDOUNY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, the Armenian Assembly of America (www.aaainc.org) submits the following testimony regarding U.S. assistance and policy in the South Caucasus region.

The Armenian Assembly stands in solidarity with the people of Belgium and expresses its deepest sympathies to the victims and families of the latest terrorist attacks, which serves as a painful reminder of all those lost in other senseless acts of terror.

The Armenian Assembly urges the Subcommittee to allocate not less than \$40 million in assistance to Armenia, including at least \$1.7 million in Foreign Military Financing, and \$600,000 in International Military Education Training assistance to Armenia. The Assembly also requests not less than \$5 million in assistance to Nagorno Karabakh, especially for the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Center, as well as directing funds to the largely Armenian populated Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia. The Assembly also urges enhanced assistance to Christian and other minority communities at risk in the Middle East, with a particular focus of concern regarding the continued unrest in Syria, particularly the battleground city of Aleppo where Armenian churches and other institutions have come under attack (see: <http://aaainc.org/index.php?id=1040>). The Assembly also supports the request letter spearheaded by Representatives Frank Pallone, Jr. and Robert Dold and signed by 31 of their colleagues outlining seven key priorities regarding U.S.-Armenia/U.S.-Karabakh relations.

Established in 1972, the Armenian Assembly is the largest Washington-based organization promoting public understanding and awareness of Armenian issues. The Assembly's extensive experience in Armenia, working closely with key government agencies, officials, and charitable organizations, provides us with unique insight on how U.S. assistance can best advance policy goals in the region. We seek to maximize the effectiveness of U.S. assistance as well as strengthen the U.S. relationships with Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. We represent Armenian Americans and those who share our goals. We strongly encourage Members to travel to Armenia to see first-hand the realities on the ground and the impact of U.S. policy as well as the consequences of the Turkish and Azerbaijani blockades.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2017

I. ASSISTANCE TO ARMENIA – The Assembly urges the Subcommittee to allocate not less than \$40 million in U.S. assistance to Armenia. As you know, despite the dual blockades imposed by Turkey and Azerbaijan, Armenia continues to show its resilience, and was ranked 54th out of 178 countries rated by the Wall Street Journal-Heritage Foundation 2016 Index of Economic Freedom – well above other countries in the region. Armenia has also met the FY 2014, 2015 and 2016 eligibility requirements for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, of which we strongly support a second U.S.-Armenia compact.

The United States has spoken clearly about the need for Turkey to lift its more than 20-year blockade of Armenia and establish diplomatic relations with Armenia, both of which are also required under international treaties. Despite Turkey's public commitment to normalize relations without preconditions, as evidenced by the signing of the Protocols between Turkey and Armenia under international auspices in October of 2009, the Turkish government failed to do so.

As both former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and current Secretary John Kerry have indicated, the ball is in Turkey's court. Instead of moving forward, no concrete steps were taken by Turkey, which sought to add new conditions, including with respect to the Nagorno Karabakh peace process. Working in tandem with Turkey, Azerbaijan torpedoed the Protocols signed with Armenia. Azerbaijan also continues its blockade of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh in lock-step with Turkey. **We, therefore, urge the adoption of new report language requiring a full accounting of the steps the United States has taken and the responses therein to eliminate the Turkish and Azeri blockades of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh.** We must and can do more to ensure that the last closed border in Europe is open. Continued and robust assistance helps to offset the impact of these blockades, and reflects America's values.

II. ASSISTANCE TO NAGORNO KARABAKH – The Assembly appreciates and welcomes the ongoing support that the U.S. provides to Karabakh as it rebuilds from the war launched against it by Azerbaijan and further strengthens its democratic institutions. **Given the ongoing humanitarian and development needs facing the people of Nagorno Karabakh, including health, transportation infrastructure, education, de-mining, drinking water, and sanitation projects, the Assembly urges not less than \$5 million be allocated in the FY 17 Bill.** The Assembly also supports assistance for the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Center in Stepanakert and reiterates the Pallone-Dold request for funds to support “rehabilitation and regional clinics, which serve over 1,000 children and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities every year.” Due to Azerbaijan's aggressive stance, the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, which has maintained a high level of democratic development, does not enjoy the benefit of international assistance and investment programs available to other former Soviet countries. For a relatively small investment, the U.S. has the opportunity to make a significant difference in the everyday lives of the people of Karabakh.

III. SECTION 907 OF THE FREEDOM SUPPORT ACT – The U.S. took a principled stand against Azeri aggression by adopting Section 907. Unfortunately, Azerbaijan has shown its willingness to flaunt U.S. and international law, and continues to violate Section 907 by taking military action against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. Despite the signed 1994 cease-fire agreement, Azerbaijan's president has said he will continue firing on Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia.

Azerbaijan's rhetoric has been left unabated for far too long and is now matched by its deadly cease-fire violations. In fact, Azerbaijan's violations skyrocketed to over 30,000 in 2015, and include the inexplicable targeting of a kindergarten in Armenia's Tavush border region and other civilian areas, not to mention the continual acts of vandalism, such as destroying centuries-old Armenian cemeteries noted for their historic monuments. **The United States should directly condemn such actions and avoid engaging in false equivalency between the aggressor and those defending themselves.** Thus, the Assembly urges the Subcommittee to suspend the waiver authority granted in the aftermath of 9-11 pursuant to then-Secretary of State Colin Powell's

request for flexibility to counter terrorist elements and organizations operating in Azerbaijan – and to fully reinstate Section 907. Further, given Azerbaijan's military expenditures, which are reported to exceed the entire national budget of Armenia, and unconscionable pardon of an Azeri officer (Ramil Safarov) who brutally murdered an Armenian officer (Gurgen Margaryan) at a NATO Partnership-for-Peace training exercise, the Assembly urges the cessation of U.S. military assistance to Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan does not need it, and America cannot afford it.

IV. THE NAGORNO KARABAKH PEACE PROCESS – The United States, as a Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group has a vested interest in advancing peace and bringing stability to the region. The governments of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh have consistently indicated their desire to peacefully resolve the conflict, and have offered confidence-building measures to help reduce tensions and build trust. Azerbaijan, however, has chosen a different path – one of blockade, bellicose rhetoric, deadly cease-fire violations, and attempts to isolate Armenia as evidenced by Azerbaijan's counterproductive stance to the Armenia-Turkey Protocols.

In view of the escalation of the deadly cease-fire violations by Azerbaijan and the increasing number of casualties, the Assembly applauds the bipartisan initiative of House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce and Ranking Member Eliot Engel to de-escalate tensions and promote peace through several concrete steps, including: 1) an agreement from all sides not to deploy snipers along the line of contact; 2) the placement of OSCE-monitored, advanced gunfire-locator systems and sound-ranging equipment to determine the source of attacks along the line of contact; and 3) the deployment of additional OSCE observers along the line of contact to better monitor cease-fire violations. The U.S. OSCE Co-Chair along with Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh support this approach. **The Assembly requests funding be made available for these and other such confidence-building measures to help facilitate a peaceful resolution of the Karabakh conflict.**

In addition, the Assembly strongly believes that Nagorno Karabakh's participation in direct negotiations should be restored as any solution to the conflict requires the consent of the people and leadership of Karabakh. The Assembly also urges the U.S. Co-Chair to the OSCE Minsk Group to uphold the fundamental principles of democracy, the right to self-determination and other basic human rights. Finally, the Assembly urges that the U.S. Department of State remove any official or unofficial restrictions on U.S.-Karabakh relations.

V. ASSISTANCE TO CHRISTIAN MINORITIES AT RISK IN THE MIDDLE EAST – The Assembly has consistently sounded the alarm on this issue long before it garnered world attention for the crisis that it is today. We remain deeply concerned about the ongoing unrest and violence in Syria, and its impact on minority populations caught in the middle fleeing for their lives and seeking refuge in new lands. Armenians, like all people of goodwill sincerely hope that the truce in Syria holds. We applaud the Near East Foundation – the successor to the congressionally chartered Near East Relief organization, which helped save tens of thousands orphaned by the Armenian Genocide – for its important work today in helping resettle those fleeing from persecution and war. The Near East Foundation's (NEF) work represents America at its best, and its programs in Jordan and Lebanon should be expanded with U.S. assistance to include Armenia, which according to *The Economist* has taken on the third largest number of refugees in Europe as a proportion of its population. "As a host country, Armenia has been absolutely exemplary in terms of the ratio of welcomed Syrian-Armenian refugees to the number of native inhabitants," said

UNHCR Representative in Armenia Christoph Bierwirth. Armenia hosts six Syrian refugees per 1,000 nationals – a ratio much higher than many European countries or the US, especially noteworthy given the country’s economic circumstance.

In addition to U.S. funding to support NEF in Armenia, we urge the Subcommittee to direct the State Department and USAID to allocate \$15 million to Armenia from the FY 17 funds made available for refugee assistance and resettlement as Armenia seeks to absorb those fleeing from Syria, as well as implement measures to ensure that gaps in distribution of relief aid are addressed so that all those in need of urgent humanitarian assistance are reached.

Further, having discussed the importance of H.Con.Res. 75 with House Speaker Paul Ryan this month, which condemned the atrocities committed by ISIS as genocide against Christian, Yezidi, and other religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria, we applaud its passage and urge the inclusion of report language that makes it clear that minority communities, wherever they may reside, shall be afforded protection and safeguarded. Simply stated, there has to be a place for Christians to live safely in the Middle East. Armenians having been targeting for annihilation in the twentieth century are deeply troubled that 100 years later descendants of genocide survivors in Iraq and Syria are facing similar genocidal atrocities today.

VI. U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE – The Assembly supports the Administration’s FY 17 request of \$1 million in Foreign Military Financing, and \$600,000 in International Military Education Training assistance to Armenia and also urges additional funding for FMF at the FY 15 level of \$1.7 million. Earlier this month, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg thanked Armenia for its contributions to NATO’s missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo. The Secretary General also highlighted Armenia’s sustained cooperation with NATO in the areas of defense reform, enhanced interoperability, defense education reform, and civil emergency planning. NATO desk officer for the South Caucasus Steffen Elgersma also stated this month that Armenia’s contribution to international security is “very impressive.”

VII. ASSISTANCE TO THE SAMTSKHE-JAVAKHETI REGION OF GEORGIA – Building on U.S. assistance already provided to the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia through the Millennium Challenge Compact, the Assembly strongly supports targeted assistance for economic development and job-creation programs in Samtskhe-Javakheti.

VIII. ENERGY SECURITY – During the past decade, strategic energy projects launched with U.S. support in the South Caucasus have created long-term development opportunities for most of the nations in the region. However, these initiatives have not benefited Armenia, due to Turkish and Azerbaijani attempts to isolate Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh through blockades and other measures. Such actions to exclude Armenia from regional projects run counter to stated U.S. policy goals of regional cooperation and economic integration. **The Assembly, therefore, urges the Subcommittee to utilize all the tools at its disposal to pave the way for Armenia’s full involvement in and integration with existing and future energy and development projects in the region.**

VIX. AFFIRMING THE U.S. RECORD ON THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE – Last April, Representatives Anna Eshoo, Frank Pallone, Jr., Jackie Speier, and David Trott joined the presidential delegation led by U.S. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew to commemorate the centennial of the Armenian Genocide in Yerevan. As we commemorate the Armenian Genocide this April 24th, Congress will have another opportunity to adhere to its long-standing values by reaffirming America’s proud chapter in history in helping to save the survivors of the first genocide of the twentieth century. **We also strongly urge President Barack Obama to fulfill his campaign promise wherein he stated: “America deserves a leader who speaks truthfully about the Armenian Genocide and responds forcefully to all genocides. I intend to be that President.”**

President Obama, like former president George W. Bush, expressed sympathy and support for those individuals within Turkey trying to come to terms with the past and create a brighter future for their country. Until the United States leads, by unequivocally acknowledging its own record affirming the Armenian Genocide, it puts those people at risk. Further, Turkey’s treatment of the broader Kurdish issue as one of terrorism should be of concern to all Americans as the Kurds are an indispensable ally in Iraq and Syria in the fight against ISIS. The fact there is evidence that Turkey has served as a life-line for ISIS also needs to be taken into account.

CONCLUSION – Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the Armenian American community, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Congress for its assistance to Armenia and the Nagorno Karabakh Republic. Armenian Americans gratefully remember the support the U.S. provided after the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, as Armenia moved boldly toward independence in 1991, during Karabakh’s struggle for freedom and democracy, and America’s proud record of humanitarian intervention during the 1915 Armenian Genocide. The enduring and natural bonds that exist between the U.S. and Armenia are readily apparent in Armenia’s ongoing support for America. Armenians in Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh consider the United States a close friend and ally. This is a relationship that spans families and generations across the three countries. Given its central location, Christian heritage, entrepreneurial spirit and western value system, Armenia is poised to play a pivotal role in helping the United States achieve its stated policy objectives in the region. The Armenian Assembly of America greatly appreciates your attention to these policy matters and looks forward to working with the distinguished Members of the Subcommittee throughout the remainder of this Congress.

**Testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on
State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
March 18, 2016
Submitted by Theo Sittler, Legislative Secretary
Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers)**

Summary

USAID's Complex Crises Fund (CCF) is the only funding mechanism that enables USAID, in consultation with the Department of State, to rapidly "prevent and respond to emerging or unforeseen crises." The CCF track record in Jordan and the Central African Republic provides strong evidence of the effectiveness of this program. We urge \$100 million in funding in FY2017 for the Complex Crises Fund.

Testimony

Since 1943, FCNL has lobbied Congress to prevent violent conflict and help build a more peaceful world. After all these years, we are encouraged by the consensus now emerging among policymakers that the U.S. needs to invest more in developing *nonmilitary* tools for addressing global problems and preventing deadly conflict *before* it erupts. Such investments would save lives, as well as significant taxpayer dollars. As Friends, we have seen that peaceful prevention of deadly conflict is possible, through partnerships with local civil society around the world and coordinated U.S. government action. Our request specifically pertains to the Complex Crises Fund.

We agree with Secretary of Defense Ash Carter,¹ Secretary of State John Kerry,² and bipartisan leaders in Congress,³ who recognize the importance of strengthening civilian capacity in order to meet today's complex security and humanitarian challenges.

The international affairs budget includes a number of modest but important investments that will save scarce resources by improving the U.S. government's ability to prevent and mitigate conflict. The initiative outlined below represents a relatively small investment that could save billions of dollars and thousands of lives by preventing crises from turning violent, stemming mass atrocities, and avoiding costly humanitarian or military interventions later on.

¹ <http://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech-View/Article/606657/remarks-by-secretary-carter-at-the-global-chiefs-of-mission-conference>

² http://www.brookings.edu/~media/events/2009/5/21-foreign-assistance/20090521_foreign_assistance.pdf

³ <http://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/ranking/release/us-senators-introduce-bipartisan-genocide-and-atrocities-prevention-act-of-2016>

Complex Crises Fund (CCF)

USAID's Complex Crises Fund (CCF) is the only funding mechanism that enables USAID, in consultation with the Department of State, to rapidly "prevent and respond to emerging or unforeseen crises." The CCF allows the U.S. government to undertake conflict and atrocities prevention, stabilization, and response activities in overseas complex crises.

The Complex Crises Fund contributes to overarching U.S. national security goals. It is critical in situations where neglecting to act could jeopardize foreign policy interests or development goals. Since its inception in 2010, the CCF has funded programs to prevent and respond to emerging serious situations in 25 countries. By investing in the prevention of violent conflict and mass atrocities, American tax payers ultimately save money in the long term by avoiding costly response efforts.

Jordan: refugee response and conflict prevention

In Jordan, for example, USAID recognized the potential for instability due to water scarcity coupled with a Syrian refugee influx. Its use of the Complex Crises Fund enabled an American NGO to carry out a \$20 million program that addressed Jordanian water demands through community-based initiatives. The NGO engaged extensively with the Government of Jordan, local organizations, and regional water companies to administer community-based grants, allowing them to fund immediate response and quick-impact water projects as well as the maintenance and management of regional water systems. These strategic partnerships helped to facilitate workshops on leadership, mediation, and conflict management in communities that hosted refugees.⁴

In the CCF Mid-Cycle review of Jordan, USAID found the funding strengthened the operational capacity of institutions in Northern Jordan's water and sanitation sectors, while increasing community resiliency in response to internal and external stresses.⁵

Implementing this important program supported the prevention of conflict between refugees and host communities in Jordan.

Central African Republic: conflict prevention yields results

Similarly, as mass violence erupted between Muslims and Christians in the Central Africa Republic (CAR) in 2013, USAID used \$11 million of CCF funding to support a program focused on peacefully managing tensions and rebuilding community cohesion between Muslim and Christian groups.⁶ The program trained local community leaders and community associations in negotiation and conflict mediation techniques, supporting key stakeholders to resolve conflicts at the community level.

⁴ https://d2zvf8ayvg1369.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/MercyCorps_TappedOut_JordanWaterReport_March204.pdf

⁵ www.alnap.org/pool/files/470-pa00iw21.pdf

⁶ <https://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/building-community-resilience-during-violent-conflict-lessons-learned-mercycorps>

One U.S.-based NGO implementing the program organized at least 90 joint socioeconomic projects between Muslim and Christian entrepreneurs to help fund mutually beneficial community restoration projects. The NGO also organized a network of motivated peer educators, mainly young people, to conduct regular outreach and community mobilization activities around the principles of nonviolence and peaceful conflict resolution. The final evaluation of the program found that the initiatives created a *532% increase* in respondents' perceptions that conflicts were now being resolved peacefully in their communities and an *86% increase* in the number of respondents who trusted the other group.⁷

Conclusion

Both of these cases exemplify the importance of conflict prevention and peacebuilding tools to effectively address today's complex crises.

Narrow windows of opportunity often exist in which community-level interventions can help prevent the escalation of violence and stop further destruction. The Complex Crises Fund's flexibility and rapid response mechanism enables the U.S. government, along with NGO partners, to seize these opportunities and undertake rapid prevention, stabilization, and response activities to address emerging crises.

Already in high demand, an expansion of CCF would provide the bandwidth for the U.S. to seize critical opportunities and properly fund the types of responses needed to prevent or mitigate violence during unforeseen conflicts.

In FY2017, we urge you to fund \$100 million to the Complex Crises Fund.

⁷ https://d2zyf8avvg1369.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/Building%20Resilience%20During%20Conflict%20-%20Policy%20One-Pager_Q.pdf

Chairwoman Granger, members of the Subcommittee: Rotary International appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony in support of continuation of funding for Fiscal Year 2017 for the Polio Eradication Initiative of the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is an unprecedented model of cooperation among national governments, civil society and UN agencies to work together to reach the most vulnerable through a safe, cost-effective public health intervention, and one which is increasingly being combined with opportunistic, complementary interventions such as the distribution of life-saving vitamin A drops, oral rehydration therapy, zinc supplements, and even something as simple as the distribution of soap. The goal of a polio free world is within our grasp because polio eradication strategies work even in the most challenging environments and circumstances. Rotary International encourages sustained funding for USAID's Polio Eradication Initiative at \$59 million, the level provided in Fiscal Year 2016. Such support would enable USAID to continue its critical role in implementing the polio eradication strategies and innovations outlined in the *Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan (2013-2018)*.

PROGRESS IN THE GLOBAL PROGRAM TO ERADICATE POLIO

Through use of past best practices and innovations, significant strides were made in 2015 toward stopping transmission of polio while sustaining gains in areas at risk for polio outbreaks. Thanks to this committee's leadership in appropriating funds supporting the Polio Eradication Activities of USAID:

- In 2015, there were fewer cases of polio in fewer places than in any point in history. Only 74 cases were confirmed for the entire year – a decrease of more than 80% over 2014 levels. Only two countries – Pakistan and Afghanistan – confirmed cases of wild polio in 2015.
- There have been no cases of polio on the African continent since August of 2014.
- Nigeria was removed from the list of endemic countries in September 2015 following more than a year without a case of wild polio.
- Polio immunization campaigns reaching more than 400 million children were conducted in more than 30 countries, primarily in Africa, South Asia and the Middle East.
- Polio outbreaks in the Middle East, Horn of Africa, and Central Africa, which accounted for roughly 60% of all cases in 2013, have been brought under control. All polio free countries remain at risk for outbreaks until the wild poliovirus has been eradicated in the remaining places where it persists.
- The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is cautiously optimistic that type 3 polio may have been eradicated. There have been no cases of type 3 polio since November 2012.

THE ROLE OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Rotary International, a global association of more than 34,000 Rotary clubs in more than 170 countries with a membership of over 1.2 million business and professional leaders (more than 336,000 of which are in the U.S.), has been committed to battling polio since 1985. Rotary International has contributed more than US\$1.3 billion toward a polio free world – representing the largest contribution by an international service organization to a public health initiative ever. Rotary also leads the United States Coalition for the Eradication of Polio, a group of committed child health advocates that includes the March of Dimes Foundation, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Task Force for Global Health, the United Nations Foundation, and the U.S. Fund for UNICEF. These organizations join us in thanking you for your support of the GPEI.

ROLE OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)

In April of 1996, with the support of this Subcommittee, USAID launched its own Polio Eradication Initiative to coordinate agency-wide efforts to help eradicate polio. Congress has continued its commitment to polio eradication since that time. The following are highlights of USAID's contribution to the major achievements in polio eradication in 2015.

- Focus on interrupting transmission of poliovirus in endemic countries: USAID continues to focus on disease surveillance and community mobilization in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but with a very low profile and as part of multi-donor efforts. In both countries, USAID is the largest funder (via WHO) of the polio surveillance systems, which are functioning at international standards. Suspected cases continue to be identified from all parts of these countries. These are then investigated and a response is planned based on the results. USAID is supporting the expansion of environmental surveillance as a supplemental means of identifying virus circulation.

Despite these efforts, there are pockets of hard core resistance and the violence continues. The USG, including USAID, has decided that a low profile is essential for successful eradication and is cognizant of the need to foster leadership and ownership by these governments, where accountability is with local authorities and not mistaken as an externally driven program.

In Nigeria, USAID also continues to fund the CORE Group Polio Project (CGPP), a consortium of NGOs, who have focused attention on reaching children in the conflict areas of Borno and Yobe, border areas with Cameroon, as well as high risk areas of recently endemic states.

- Sustaining Gains and Preventing Deterioration: USAID's support through WHO for surveillance is well functioning and detecting cases; our current emphasis is on closing sub-national gaps in silent areas. Support for polio surveillance is needed in every country until global certification is achieved. Most of the polio surveillance systems that have been functioning with high quality for a number of years are now sustaining their achievements while expanding to include surveillance for measles, rubella and other vaccine preventable diseases.

Outbreak response and preparedness: Each WHO region, even those already certified polio-free conducts quarterly risk assessments to identify vulnerable areas that could jeopardize global eradication efforts if a virus importation were to occur. USAID continues to maintain vigilant focus on effective outbreak response via advocating increased SIAs in outbreak countries. USAID also continues to support outbreak prevention and greater preparedness in the remaining vulnerable countries for example through its facilitation of cross-regional simulation exercises, cross-border meetings, and trying to shine a spotlight on especially vulnerable countries.

USAID has also provided financial and technical support for the responses to vaccine-derived polio outbreaks in Guinea, Mali, Ukraine, Madagascar, Laos and Burma. Each country has its own challenges from weak political support, poor health infrastructure, insufficient human resources and mistrust of communities. USAID continues to work with partners and governments to address and overcome these obstacles.

In polio-free countries, USAID continues to promote the need to sustain high population immunity and surveillance and reduce the threat of re-emergence by reducing the number of accumulated susceptible children. USAID focuses on outbreak response, outbreak simulation activities, cross-border coordination, and identification of marginalized populations such as migrants, nomads and refugees.

USAID has also designated outbreak response funds within its grant to WHO to allow specifically for rapid response to any wild or vaccine derived polio case found in a previously polio-free area.

- Legacy planning: USAID is also an active participant in the Polio Legacy/Transition planning process. Every country currently receiving polio funds, through any donor or source, is conducting an inventory of this support, who and what is being funded, and if there are lessons learned to be mainstreamed in support of broader public health goals. The intention of this work is to increase ownership and responsibility for sustaining those aspects of polio eradication that are most critical in the long-term and work with donors to fund any remaining gaps.
- Technical areas of emphasis: The majority of USAID funds are used for polio surveillance, through Ministry of Health-WHO's facility-based reporting system, and, through the NGOs community-based case detection approach. Both approaches work to rapidly identify cases of Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP), the signal condition for polio. It was USAID's support for surveillance that detected the cases in all the endemic countries. Timely identification of cases triggers a rapid response thereby slowing outbreaks as well as revealing areas of low immunization coverage. This information is vital for identifying existing and emerging gaps in population immunity. Surveillance also helps document the absence of disease – the key indicator of success. This has been especially important in the 23 countries USAID supports in Africa, South Asia and the Near East.
- Communications: Communications is another area where USAID provides significant resources. Understanding why parents refuse vaccination, hide kids from vaccination or switch from accepting to refusing immunization is at the heart of our mobilization efforts. Developing persuasive messages provided through reputable channels, and respectfully addressing parental concerns has been key to building trust. As more countries become polio-free, USAID is aware of and works to address the need to avoid country complacency through a relatively minor investment in conducting exercises that foster vigilance and sustained quality immunization activities.
- Strategic technical assistance and expertise: USAID staff continue to be deeply involved in the polio eradication efforts through national Inter-Agency Coordinating Committees, Technical Advisory Groups, through direct observation of immunization campaigns, and in policy dialogue with host-countries, partners, key stakeholders and other donors.
- Maintaining focus in polio-free/at risk countries: USAID continues to promote the need to sustain high population immunity and surveillance and reduce the threat of re-emergence by reducing the number of accumulated susceptible children. The Independent Monitoring Board has identified a number of countries at risk of re-introduction of virus; and USAID has been pro-actively working to raise awareness of the need to close emerging gaps.

In all countries, USAID promotes improving quality of immunization campaigns through better planning and feedback, identifying reasons for missed children through independent monitoring and post-campaign surveys, and tracking the virus through enhanced disease surveillance by communities themselves and through health facilities and expanding environmental surveillance. USAID also supports and encourages the promotion of polio eradication campaigns through mass media, print and interpersonal communication. The messages are adapted to local conditions after each round based on community feedback. Sustaining public trust in immunization is of paramount importance.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET REQUEST

For Fiscal Year 2017, we respectfully request this subcommittee to provide \$59 million for the polio eradication activities of USAID, the same level that was provided in Fiscal Year 2016. This funding will ensure that USAID continues its essential contribution toward work to interrupt polio transmission in the places where it persists while protecting the gains made in polio free countries and countries which remain at risk for outbreaks.

BENEFITS OF POLIO ERADICATION

Since 1988, over 15 million people who would otherwise have been paralyzed are walking because they have been immunized against polio. Tens of thousands of public health workers have been trained to manage massive immunization programs and investigate cases of acute flaccid paralysis. Cold chain, transport and communications systems for immunization have been strengthened. The global network of 145 laboratories and trained personnel established by the GPEI also tracks measles, rubella, yellow fever, meningitis, and other deadly infectious diseases and will do so long after polio is eradicated.

In financial terms, the global effort to eradicate polio has saved more than \$27 billion in health costs since 1988. A study published in the November 2010 issue of the journal *Vaccine* estimates that the GPEI could provide net benefits of at least \$40-50 billion. Polio eradication is a cost-effective public health investment with permanent benefits. On the other hand, as many as 200,000 children could be paralyzed annually in the next 10 years if the world fails to capitalize on the more than \$11 billion already invested in eradication. Success will ensure that the significant investment made by the US, Rotary International, and many other countries and entities, is protected in perpetuity.

Submitted Testimony
House Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
John Gillies, Co-Chair of the Basic Education Coalition

March 24, 2016

Madam Chair and Ranking Member Lowey, I am pleased to submit this testimony on behalf of the Basic Education Coalition, a group of 27 humanitarian and development institutions dedicated to ensuring that the world's children receive a quality basic education. My name is John Gillies, and I am a co-chair of the Coalition's Board of Directors and Director of the Global Learning Group at FHI 360. The members of the Basic Education Coalition are deeply appreciative of the Committee's continued support for international basic education programs, and we sincerely thank you for your strong and consistent leadership in providing hope and opportunity to children around the world. For fiscal year 2017, the Coalition recommends a U.S. investment of \$800 million in international basic education programs, with at least \$600 million of that amount coming from the Development Assistance account.

We certainly appreciate that Congress must grapple with hard spending choices and tough political realities. However, ensuring that the world's poorest and most vulnerable children can learn to read, write, do basic math and acquire critical life skills remains one of the best investments the United States can make toward eliminating global poverty. Now is not the time to cut efficient and effective programs, like basic education, that are a cornerstone for success in sustainable development across all sectors and have a deep impact on the future. Programs that offer hope and opportunity to millions of children and youth, regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality and ability level, build markets for U.S. exports, and enhance stability and security worldwide.

Over the past 30 years, I have visited countless schools and met with teachers, students and parents. They all want the same thing. They want their children to learn so that they can succeed in life. This is shown by the incredible commitment and sacrifice that parents and communities demonstrate, from the Ethiopian subsistence farmer who volunteers his time to give children extra tutoring on reading to the Salvadoran parents who dedicate their nights and weekends doing school management. The children show equal determination to get an education, from the star 6th grader from Bangladesh who speaks out against teacher violence to the countless children in refugee camps and conflict situations whose daily trip to school is fraught with risk. USAID programs are uniquely effective at both directly supporting these children and teachers as well as building systems, policies, and capacity at a district and national level to enable sustained improvement. These education programs, from the classroom to the national system, are the foundation for every country to develop their future leaders and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It is really no wonder that, according to a recent UN survey called the *My World Survey*, citizens in nearly 200 countries around the world say that a good education should be at the very top of the priority list for development.

The US Response: With the support of this committee, USAID has joined in the global effort to ensure children around the world access to quality education. Through the three goals of the USAID education strategy and the *Let Girls Learn Initiative*, USAID is making clear progress

and changing the lives of young people around the world. From FY2011-FY2014, US basic education programs have:

- Reached 30 million unique learners in over 40 countries
- Trained over 1.2 million teachers and 137,000 school officials
- Supported 84,000 school governance structures
- Distributed 83 million books and learning materials
- Repaired over 7,000 classrooms

In addition to efforts under the education strategy, the U.S. government, led by First Lady Michelle Obama, has launched the Let Girls Learn Initiative to remove the barriers faced by the 62 million girls who are not in school. The whole of government initiative leverages US investments to help expand opportunities for adolescent girls through programs to address: education; leadership; health and nutrition program; preventing gender-based violence; and preventing child, early and forced marriage.

With strong global support and a clear U.S. strategy, we have the opportunity to build on the tremendous progress that has been made with the benefit of the resources allocated by this committee.

The Global Context: Through U.S. and international investments, tremendous progress has been made in improving education around the world. The number of children and adolescents who are out of school around the world has dropped by almost half since 2000. Global literacy has risen from 76% in 1990 to nearly 84% in 2010, and significant gains have been made in gender parity around the world.

Though great gains in global education have been made, much remains to be done. Approximately 124 million children and youth remain out of school, and considerable challenges in access, equity and quality remain. A staggering 40% of the world's primary-school-age population, or 250 million children, are failing to learn the most basic skills. USAID has played a critical role in shining the light on this global learning crisis, and we now know that the impact of education cannot be measured in the number of students enrolled, or the number of hours in a classroom. Rather, education's impact is seen when learning outcomes improve.

USAID Education Strategy: USAID has led the charge to deepen evidence-based programming. USAID-funded early grade reading assessments have helped focus the world community on what actually works and what does not work when it comes to improving children's learning. Other bilateral, multilateral, and private sector donors have followed the US Government's lead and are now prioritizing learning outcomes.

Achieving the goals of the USAID education strategy and ensuring that children are not only enrolled in school - but also learning - will require continued interventions and a strong commitment by the United States. Support for basic education is imperative to help USAID reach its strategic goals of improving reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades and increasing equitable access to education in crisis environments for 15 million children. With the US Government's continued leadership in this area, the global community is in a much

stronger position today to help children, strengthen communities and improve countries' development outcomes.

Education's Impact on Economic Growth: Education is critical to boosting global economic growth. As populations around the world continue to grow, education programs will help to expand the U.S. consumer base in the developing world. Through Goals 1 and 2 of the education strategy, USAID is working to foster the skills necessary for a sustainable global workforce and long-term trading partners.

Educating the world's poor is essential to building the stable trading partners that growing U.S. export markets require. Today, the fastest-growing markets for America's goods are in developing countries, representing 40% of U.S. exports and one out of every five American jobs. For every 10% increase in U.S. exports, there is a 7% boost in U.S. employment. Research shows that if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills, 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty – a 12% drop in global poverty.

BEC member programs, under Goal 1 of the USAID education strategy, are helping to improve student learning and reading skills, so that one day these children can enter the workforce and be productive members of society. In Yemen, children have faced high drop-out rates and low primary school enrollment. Through BEC programs, learning has improved for over 1.5 million children and oral reading fluency has increased by 500 percent. In Egypt, where youth face continued instability, programs have dramatically improved literacy - up to 194% in some cases. The Early Grade Reading Assessment was so successful in Egypt, that the Ministry of Education requested support from USAID to expand the program to all 27 governorates.

Ensuring Education in Emergencies: One of the biggest obstacles to global progress is the troubling increase in crises around the world and their devastating impact on children. Today, a record 59.5 million people have been forcibly displaced around the world, a level not seen since the post-World War II era, with children below 18 years of age making up 51% of the refugee population. With conflicts lasting an average of 12 years, and refugees and IDPs displaced for an average of 17 and 20 years respectively, generations of young people are missing out on an education and the opportunity to fulfill their potential. According to recent reports, 80 million children around the world have had their education disrupted by conflicts and natural disasters, which have left 37 million primary and lower-secondary-school age children out of school.

Unfortunately, schoolchildren in conflict areas are increasingly the targets of extremists groups who understand an uneducated populace is easier to control and fear the power of education. Attacks by Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Taliban in Pakistan, the Lord's Resistance Army in South Sudan and Al-Shabaab in Somalia are becoming all too common. However, through quality formal and non-formal education programs, we can provide children and youth in conflict areas with a sense of hope and normalcy when their lives have been disrupted, promote their psychosocial well-being and cognitive development, and lessen their risk of being recruited into dangerous activities.

Spotlight on Syria: Before the start of the civil war in 2011, all children could attend 12 years of school for free and the country had a 90% literacy rate. It took

just two years of civil war to erase all education progress made since the start of the century. Now, one in four schools has been destroyed, and 2.6 million children are left out of school. Nearly 5 million refugees have fled Syria to neighboring countries, with children making up half of the refugees. We commend Secretary of State John Kerry's focus on ensuring that displaced populations receive an education and his pledge of \$290 million in development assistance to support schooling for 300,000 refugee youth in Jordan and Lebanon.

By increasing access to education and learning opportunities in conflict and crisis situations under Goal 3 of the education strategy, USAID is working to ensure that at-risk children and adolescents have access to a quality education. USAID is working with aid organizations and other international donors to ensure children in Syria and surrounding refugee countries have access to education programs, as well as life-saving health and counseling services. In Egypt, USAID is working with the ministry to reduce the negative impacts of future political and social disruptions on the school system and increase the delivery of educational services during a crisis. In Afghanistan, programs are working to reverse the impact of the Taliban regime on young girls and eliminate the gender gap. Programs continue to increase the number of qualified teachers, raise girls' school attendance and work directly with the ministry to create gender-sensitive policies and procedures. Since the end of Sierra Leone's civil war, programs have helped to increase access to psychosocial education, provided vocational training to former soldiers, unaccompanied and internally displaced children, children of adult amputees, and teenage mothers.

U.S. assistance has been critical in finding new ways to reach these groups with meaningful, effective education. Through innovative, low-cost technologies, such as interactive and long-distance radio instruction, cell phones, computers, and the internet, we can now reach even more children who would have otherwise remained marginalized and vulnerable. In Southern Sudan, radio-based learning and other technologies are being used to deliver quality education programs to populations ravaged by years of civil war. With relatively modest investments and innovative, low-cost measures, we can greatly expand our reach. For example, \$10 million in spending means that an estimated 100,000 more children annually can receive a good quality primary school education.

By ensuring at-risk children and a burgeoning youth population are in school -- and learning -- we can foster stability and political reform. A population that is able to read, write and think critically is far more able to hold its leaders accountable. By equipping populations vulnerable to civil war and regional conflict with the skills and capacities to shape their own future, the U.S. also can better promote lasting peace.

More than just programs: U.S. taxpayer support is having a tangible impact, but our progress is not based on dollars alone. Our knowledge transfer is as important as our program success. We work directly with local stakeholders, from the national ministry to private sector employers and community leaders, to build local capacity, establish effective, evidence-based policies, transfer technology and innovation, and strengthen the performance of these complex systems. Through direct program interventions in the field to expand access, improve learning, and foster long-term impact, US programs are more sustainable and create lasting change.

U.S. assistance is recognized and valued by the people with whom we work and helps to build relationships with partner countries. Programs help to increase local capacity and opportunity, while building long-term trust and understanding with communities and individuals. U.S. assistance is notable for its ability to work hand in hand with local governments and communities to find solutions to critical problems.

Value of Investment: As pressure to reduce the budget is at an all-time high, there is no better way to stretch our development dollars than to invest in education. Like most of the best investments, the payoff is not measured only in immediate increases in enrollment or literacy but also through substantial long-term multipliers across society. For every \$1 spent on education, as much as \$10 to \$15 can be generated in economic growth. Or, look at its effect on global health. Young people who have completed primary education are roughly half as likely to contract HIV and AIDS as those with little or no education. Women with secondary education are far more likely to be aware of measures for preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, which currently infects 370,000 children a year. A recent study found that half of the reduction of child mortality over the past 40 years was due to better education of women. In addition, one study of 63 countries demonstrated that educating women was by far the most important factor in reducing malnutrition - more important even than improvements to the food supply. In many countries, the school functions as the center of community life and a focal point for other development efforts, such as deworming and ensuring access to clean water, as envisioned in Mrs. Lowey's "Communities of Learning" approach.

In conclusion, we now have the benefit of strong Congressional support, a clear USAID strategy on education, innovative solutions, and strategies that directly address country needs. We have the opportunity for a deeper, more sustainable impact on the lives and hopes of the world's poor children. The Basic Education Coalition looks forward to working with the Subcommittee and Congress, to ensure that quality basic education remains a pillar of our foreign assistance. By so doing, and by ensuring program accountability and impact, we can help alleviate poverty, strengthen societies, foster stability and security, and spur economic growth, abroad and here at home.

Thank you for your continued support and for your consideration of our request.

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Testimony of Mr. Metodija A. Koloski, the Co-Founder and President of United Macedonian Diaspora and Mr. Gavin Kopel, Senior International Policy & Diplomacy Fellow of United Macedonian Diaspora, as submitted to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs:

March 24, 2016

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Congresswoman Lowey, and Members of the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit written testimony to your Subcommittee on behalf of the United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD), the voice of our nation's close to half a million Americans of Macedonian heritage. The Macedonian-American community is largely based in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, with pockets in Arizona, California, and Florida, among other locations.

With the release of the proposed FY 2017 foreign assistance budget, the Republic of Macedonia is expected to receive a total of \$13.7 million in foreign aid from the United States. While the projected amount is a 17.6% increase from the \$11.3 million provided by the FY 2016 budget, it is still a drastic decrease from the \$27.5 million that was provided to Macedonia in FY 2011. The Macedonian-American community is very concerned that the level of funding being offered to Macedonia does not accurately reflect the close relationship between the two allies, especially given the U.S.-Macedonia Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in May 2008 urging enhanced political, military, economic, and people-to-people ties.

Since 1993, the United States has invested over \$1 billion in Macedonia's development with over \$500 million coming from USAID and the other \$500 million from other U.S. government sources. This assistance has aided Macedonia in overcoming the economic legacy of a command economy it was imposed on it as part of Yugoslavia as well as the long-lasting effects of Greece's three-year economic embargo of the newly independent Macedonia, which can still be felt after twenty years.

In the *USAID/Macedonia Strategic Plan Summary 2011-2015*, the objectives of creating greater checks and balances in democratic processes, a basic education system that better prepares youth for the modern economy and a stable democracy, and increased job-creating private sector growth in targeted sectors were laid out. While strides in these areas have been made, according to reporting agencies such as Freedom House, Macedonia still lags behind other democracies in the areas of media freedom, governance and rule of law, and economic growth.

Aid from USAID has been especially important in the educational sector. As a result of USAID projects, students have gained access to technology through the more than 6,000 computers provided to primary and secondary schools. More than 10,000 teachers were trained by USAID programs in order to better instruct students in IT, math, and science. As a result of these innovations in education, Macedonian teachers were awarded with the European Grand Prix for innovation in computer-assisted learning, at Microsoft's Innovative Education Forum in 2011. USAID has also been active sponsor of the Macedonia Connects program. This program has resulted in the provision of broadband internet connectivity to almost 550 elementary and secondary schools, research institutions, and universities, allowing Macedonia to become the first all-wireless internet country in the world.

Assistance from the United States through USAID programs has been used to improve the status of women and further integrate minorities living in Macedonia. To further integrate minorities such as the Roma community, USAID School Integration Teams have been formed in more than 200 schools to improve the educational opportunities for more than 1,500 Roma students every year. Women have also seen their opportunities to succeed increase dramatically. From business reforms to the introduction of micro-financing, new doors have been opened to close both gender and ethnicity divides. Projects in the areas of economic growth, democracy and local government, education and anti-trafficking reforms have all seen the condition of minorities and women improve greatly. Macedonia was again ranked tier 1 by the State Department's Human Trafficking Report in 2015; the only country in the region to be included in the tier.

For the Macedonian economy to continue to develop, business development must increase through improving the competitiveness of small and medium size businesses and facilitating an increase of economic activity. Private business development has been hindered by lingering effects of the Yugoslav command economy and the Greek economic embargo in the 90s, which caused unemployment in Macedonia to reach 70%. In the last decade, the Macedonian economy has grown thanks in part to the efforts of USAID programs to improve competitiveness, create investment opportunities, improving agricultural competitiveness, enhancing microfinance availability, and removing barriers to start small businesses. According to the Heritage Foundation 2016 Index of Economic Freedom, Macedonia's economic freedom score is 67.5, which is nearly ten points higher than the global average.

One of Macedonia's key drivers of economic growth has been in the tourism industry. Aid money has played a critical role in the improvement of domestic infrastructure needed to support this growing industry. Funding from foreign assistance has provided the capital needed to modernize Skopje's international airport and maintain the network of roads that connect Macedonian landmarks. Aid targeted at improving agricultural competitiveness and export promotion has greatly benefitted Macedonia's growing wine industry. For example, the Bovin Winery has expanded its aging facilities and modernized its technology to increase production for both domestic and foreign consumption.

Possibly the most critical objective set out in the *USAID/Macedonia Strategic Plan Summary 2011-2015* for the future of Macedonia is the strengthening of democratic institutions through "greater checks and balances in democratic processes." Macedonia is currently undergoing a political crisis that has paralyzed efforts to further integrate into the trans-Atlantic community.

Three important areas that aid is needed in the forms of both technical assistance and monetary aid are judiciary independence, strengthening of civil society, and an increase in media freedom.

Current USAID programs in Macedonia are working to strengthen the judiciary in order to more strongly separate its powers from the executive and promote the rule of law. USAID programs in coordination with the American Bar Association – Rule of Law Initiative that trained over 220 judges, administrators and court accountants have made the Macedonian judiciary more fiscally responsible and decreased the time necessary to resolving newly filed cases. However, currently party affiliations still limit the balance of power between the judicial and executive branches and foreign assistance is still necessary to continue to train and educate members of the judiciary, and very importantly, increase public confidence in the rule of law. Civil society support continues to be an indispensable factor in maintaining transparency and accountability of the government. In Macedonia, civil society groups play a key role in building awareness and providing diversity training to communities, businesses and the government. In recent years, USAID's Civil Society Program has helped more than twenty civil society organizations increase their capacity to mobilize citizens and engage in civil initiatives such as research based advocacy and government oversight. Civil society in Macedonia continues to be an important source for combatting corruption and increasing public awareness of ongoing reform in the country.

USAID's projects to strengthen independent media in Macedonia are arguably the most important of all at this turbulent time in Macedonian politics. In Macedonia, 98% of its inhabitants use television as their top media provider on a weekly basis. However, currently publicly owned media outlets are strongly impacted by political parties, which can dictate funding as well as appoint members of oversight committees such as the Broadcasting Council, as well as propaganda from Russia in the form of buying press outlets and paying off or intimidating public officials in the Balkans. For these reasons, the U.S. funded Voice of America program is vital to providing the Macedonian public with an independent and trustworthy media outlet. The VOA program reaches nearly 30% of the population, more than 25% more than Radio Free Europe. Reducing or cutting funding for VOA would negatively impact the relationship between Macedonia and the United States by sending a misleading message that ties are being cut by ending an important arm of communication. VOA is a strong diplomacy tool in Macedonia that helps the U.S. maintain a strong and connected image in the region.

Improving the rule of law and balance of power between democratic institutions in Macedonia are a precondition for continued and sustained growth. Work still remains to be done in the areas of increasing transparency and accountability of government, fighting corruption, and improving the function of the Macedonian parliament. Until reforms in these areas are undertaken, Macedonia's goal of full trans-Atlantic integration through full NATO membership will be incomplete.

Confirmation of its desire to become a member of NATO was one of Macedonia's first Parliamentary actions following independence. While there is still work to be done in completing the domestic reforms necessary for membership, Macedonia has steadfastly demonstrated its commitment to the Alliance. Macedonia has been heavily invested in both the KFOR mission by hosting the mission's logistics support center and the ISAF mission, providing the fifth most troops per capita in Afghanistan. In 2010, Macedonian and American troops served side-by-side

in Afghanistan, the first deployment of its kind between the U.S. and a non-NATO member country. Aid from the U.S. in the forms of both monetary and technical assistance in the form of equipment and training have driven positive reforms that have allowed Macedonia's 7,000 strong Army receive praise from numerous U.S. military commanders. Without contributions from the U.S., Macedonia would still be lagging. Macedonia has completed all requirements for NATO accession, and we hope the country will be invited without further delay. Following Montenegro's invitation to the Alliance, it is critical that the U.S. continue to enforce its leadership role in the region by avoiding enlargement fatigue.

Currently, Macedonia's police and military are being utilized on the country's southern border with Greece to regulate the influx of migrants and refugees from the Middle East into Europe. Aid from the U.S. in light of this crisis is critical for ensuring that Macedonia has the ability to continue its efforts to provide security for Europe and NATO allies in the region through registration of individuals entering the country and sharing intelligence with its neighbors and allies in the region. Currently, Macedonia is undergoing financial strain in the face of the crisis; the cost of funding the increased border security personnel alone is more than \$100,000 per day. The United States has shown itself to be a country that concerns itself with the interests and security of its allies. Macedonia has played a significant role in supporting U.S. interests in the Balkans as well as supporting the U.S. in missions including KFOR, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and ISAF. Now more than ever, assistance from the United States can play a major role in not only Macedonia's stability but its own interests and relations with countries in the region as well as the collective security of South East Europe.

The United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) is a leading international non-governmental organization promoting the interest and needs of Macedonian communities in the United States and throughout the world. On behalf of the close to half a million Americans of Macedonian heritage, we work to foster unity, promote Macedonian culture and heritage, advance the interests of the Macedonian-American communities, and strengthen the U.S.-Macedonia bilateral relationship.

Thank you for the opportunity you have provided the United Macedonian Diaspora to submit this testimony.

**House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
March 24, 2016**

**Hindu American Foundation
Testimony on Fiscal Year 2017
Written Statement for the Record**

Samir Kalra, Esq.
Senior Director & Human Rights Fellow

Jay Kansara
Director of Government Relations

I. Introduction

On behalf of the Hindu American Foundation (HAF), a non-profit advocacy and human rights organization that has been monitoring and documenting religious freedom and human rights conditions globally for 13 years, we respectfully submit this Written Statement for the Record on appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. In particular, we would like to address the following programs in the Congressional Budget Justification FY 2017 for the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (International Security Assistance): (1) IMET: South and Central Asia (\$12.9 Million); (2) FMF: South and Central Asia (\$2.8 Million); (3) Bangladesh: Development Assistance (\$86.16 Million); (4) Nepal: Development Assistance (\$64 Million).

Moreover, we seek to provide additional recommendations on FY 2017 International Affairs Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) programs: (1) ESF - OCO: South and Central Asia (\$1,505.8 Million); (2) INCLE- OCO:Afghanistan (\$185 million); (3) INCLE- OCO: Pakistan (\$40 million); and (4) FMF - OCO: Pakistan (\$265 million)

II. Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

IMET: South and Central Asia (\$12.9 Million)

International Military Education Training (IMET) programs are of critical importance to furthering respect for human rights in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Security and defense forces, which often take on significant domestic policing roles in these two countries, continue to struggle to uphold the rule of law and protect the human rights of their citizens. This is due in part to a lack of adequate training on international human rights norms, insufficient resources, and an absence of effective cultural and religious competency programs. Moreover, a dearth of ethnic, gender, and religious diversity within the ranks of the defense forces in Pakistan and Bangladesh, particularly in officer track positions, limit their ability to deal effectively with minority populations.

Consequently, we recommend that IMET funds directed towards Pakistan and Bangladesh incorporate a greater emphasis on cultural and religious competency training. Similarly, the disbursement of IMET

funds should require the respective military establishments of these two countries to institute recruitment and advancement quotas from traditionally underrepresented communities.

FMF: South and Central Asia (\$2.8 million)

Foreign Military Financing (FMF) to professionalize security forces in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh should include requirements for increased cultural sensitivity and competency training. This will enable security forces to respond more efficiently to disasters areas or border regions that have high concentrations of ethnic and/or religious minority populations. For instance, in the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka, it is critical that the security forces, comprised predominantly of Sinhala Buddhists, are trained adequately on how to work with and gain the trust of the Tamil community (Hindus, Christians, and Muslims), in order to calibrate disaster responses effectively. Additionally, in Bangladesh, security forces must be equipped to protect the lives, properties, and places of worship of ethnic and religious minorities in the event of a natural disaster, large-scale religious riots, or in a sensitive border area.

Bangladesh: Development Assistance (\$86.16 Million)

Bangladesh has witnessed a dramatic escalation in anti-minority violence and a growing climate of religious intolerance, with systemic attacks on Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Ahmadis, and Atheists. These minorities have also been subjected routine discrimination and have been deprived of equal economic and other opportunities. Minorities are further underrepresented in government and civil positions, as well as in all branches of the security and defense forces. Development assistance to Bangladesh should thus address the conditions of minorities in order to create a more stable and secure nation.

Funds, for instance should support the induction of more religious minority community members in government programs as well as administrative and military services, particularly at the officer level. The National Human Rights Commission should be strengthened through development assistance to support constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and equal protection and to ensure the protection of minorities. Additional funds should also create religious and cultural competency training programs for all levels and branches of government. Implementation of these projects should be monitored closely by USAID and U.S. Embassy officials in Bangladesh.

Nepal: Development Assistance (\$64 million)

USAID funding and programs are essential to Nepal, particularly after the devastating earthquake in April 2015 rendering almost 9,000 people dead and 3.5 million people homeless, and causing \$10 billion in damage. Particularly damaged were cultural and historic landmarks throughout the earthquake zone causing distress to the tourism industry of Nepal, which comprises a majority of its revenue stream. Additional funding should be allocated within this sum, or added to its total, for rehabilitation of these damaged cultural sites to ensure Nepal's tourism industry remains central to its economic recovery.

In September 2015, Nepal's drafting of a new constitution resulted in several ethnic communities feeling

marginalized and politically/economically disenfranchised, particularly the Madhesi near the Nepal-India border. Any development and assistance funding for Nepal should ensure that all communities are enfranchised by the new constitutional reforms by mandated mechanisms for monitoring disbursements of aid throughout the country and amongst various communities.

Additionally, Hindus and Buddhists of Nepal - the largest religious communities in the country, have noted the influx of Christian missionaries, many affiliated with existing USAID certified partners, exploiting the population's vulnerability during this time of distress. All USAID partners should be monitored to ensure they operate closely within already mandated guidelines to not proselytize, specifically under times of distress after natural disasters.

III. International Affairs Overseas Contingency Operations

ESF - OCO: South and Central Asia (\$1,505.8 Million)

Afghanistan (\$1,027 million): Afghanistan's ongoing democratic transition and economic development still requires significant support. The country's religious minorities, Hindus and Sikhs in particular, lack sufficient political representation and are economically marginalized. Economic discrimination and disparate government treatment have left these communities with few opportunities. They similarly lack educational opportunities and face discrimination in the public school system, forcing them to attend Sikh schools with limited resources.

Consequently, the disbursement of Economic Support Funds (ESF) should support quotas for religious minorities in civil service positions and government supported programs. Moreover, ESF funds should create educational opportunities for minorities by funding additional schools for Hindus/Sikhs. Additional schools should be created by the government to allow them to obtain an education free of religious prejudice and harassment.

Pakistan (\$400 million): Religious minorities face systemic economic, political, and educational discrimination in Pakistan. Pakistan's public school system and its madrassas continue to use textbooks that indoctrinate students with prejudicial and intolerant views of religious minorities. Teachers also hold regressive views towards minorities and help fuel an intolerant educational atmosphere. ESF funds for Pakistan's education sector should go beyond reading skills and teacher capacity and should also focus on working with the Federal Education Ministry and provincial textbook boards implementing standardized curriculum reforms and on working with publishers to print new textbooks that (1) promote religious pluralism and mutual respect, (2) remove inflammatory and negative content about minorities, and (3) segregate Islamic instruction from secular subjects. Furthermore, teachers should undergo cultural competency training to help change their views towards religious minorities.

INCLE- OCO

Afghanistan (\$185 million): Strengthening Afghanistan's capacity to govern in a fair, transparent, secure, and effective manner through the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement

(INCLE) program should include provisions to address the needs of religious minorities. Afghan security forces and law enforcement have been unable or unwilling to protect Hindu and Sikh minorities from harassment, violence, and forced conversions. As a result, their ability to openly practice their faith has been severely limited. Law enforcement has failed to intervene and stop attacks on Hindu and Sikh cremation ceremonies.

Moreover, due to societal harassment and discrimination, the vast majority of Hindu and Sikh children, particularly girls, do not attend local public schools, and often put their children in Sikh schools, which receive limited government funding. Hindus do not have their own schools.

A portion of INCLE funds should therefore be accorded to bolstering security for Hindus and Sikhs and their temples allowing them to worship freely and without fear of harassment, forced conversions, societal discrimination, or interference in their religious ceremonies.

Pakistan (\$40 million): INCLE funds directed towards strengthening law enforcement and institutions in Pakistan should apportion funds that focus on provincial and local entities. In particular, INCLE funds should be used towards creating standard police and judicial procedures as well as local law enforcement training to deal with kidnappings, forced conversions, and involuntary marriages of Hindu and Christian women and girls. Although there are no definitive statistics on the number of incidents, many NGOs and human rights groups, including Global Human Rights Defence (GHRD) and the Movement for Solidarity and Peace, have estimated that more than 1,000 Hindu and Christian girls are kidnapped and forced to convert to Islam every year.

Furthermore, requirements should be placed on INCLE funds to Pakistan that support recruitment of religious and ethnic minorities in the security forces. For instance, INCLE funds should help create special task forces to protect minority places of worship, such as the plan to hire 2,000 Hindu and Christian policemen to guard religious sites in Sindh, in the aftermath of a series of attacks on churches.

Finally, INCLE funds should ensure strengthening the enforcement capacity of police personnel in rural areas of Sindh and Punjab, where current laws prohibiting bonded labor remain unenforced. Moreover, increased training should be provided to help police combat this practice that plagues millions of poor, primarily minority, Pakistanis.

FMF - OCO: Pakistan (\$265 million)

Pakistan has demonstrated a past propensity to utilize Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program funds and equipment to advance its regional ambitions, particularly in India and Afghanistan, rather than for their intended purpose of counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations. Consequently, FMF funds should be reduced in amount and adhere to strict accounting procedures that allow for a mechanism to monitor how the money is spent or how the equipment is used.

IV. Conclusion

As described and justified above, we seek the following implementations for the State Department's FY 2017 budget:

- IMET funds should ensure members of minority communities in Pakistan and Bangladesh are afforded placement in officer ranks of their respective militaries.
- FMF to professionalize security forces in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh should include requirements for increased cultural sensitivity and competency training when engaging minority communities.
- Development assistance for Bangladesh:
 - Should support the induction of more religious minority community members in government programs, administrative, and military services, particularly at the officer level;
 - The National Human Rights Commission should be strengthened through development assistance to support constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and equal protection, and to ensure the protection of minorities;
 - Additional funds should also create religious and cultural competency training programs for all levels and branches of government.
- Development assistance for Nepal:
 - Should support rehabilitation of damaged cultural and historic landmarks to ensure tourism remains essential to Nepal's economic recovery;
 - Should ensure that all communities are enfranchised by the new constitutional reforms;
 - USAID partners must be monitored to ensure they are not proselytizing, which is against already mandated guidelines.
- In Afghanistan, INCLE funds should be disbursed to enhance and bolster security for Hindus and Sikhs.
- In Pakistan, INCLE funds:
 - Should apportion resources that focus on provincial and local law enforcement along with judicial institutions;
 - Should mandate recruitment of religious and ethnic minorities in the security forces;
 - Should ensure strengthening the enforcement capacity of police personnel in rural areas of Sindh and Punjab, where current laws prohibiting bonded labor remain unenforced.
- FMF funds in Pakistan should be reduced in amount and adhere to strict accounting procedures that allow for a mechanism to monitor how the money is spent or how the equipment is used. This will be to ensure the intended counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations are carried out.

**Testimony of Conservation International
Fiscal Year 2017 Priorities
Submitted by Jill Sigal**

**Submitted to the House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
March 24, 2016**

On behalf of Conservation International, we are pleased to submit this statement for the record for the congressional appropriations process for fiscal year 2017. We recommend that fiscal year 2017 appropriations for Conservation International's priorities in the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs bill -- wildlife poaching and trafficking, the Global Environment Facility, Development Assistance, and biodiversity conservation -- be maintained at levels equivalent to those in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016*.

In October 2015, members of the Conservation International Board of Directors were honored to participate in a Round-Table discussion with Members of the House Appropriations Committee. Hosted by Chairwoman Granger and chaired by Congressman Crenshaw, that event highlighted the direct connection between resource scarcity, international conservation, and U.S. economic and national security interests. We were very encouraged by the strong bipartisan recognition of the role that nature plays in our security and well-being, and of the need to make strategic investments today that help prevent the need for much larger expenditures in the future. Themes from the Round-Table were reflected in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016*, which we regard as a landmark accomplishment for international conservation.

Conservation International works to conserve nature for the well-being of people around the world. Since the organization was founded nearly 30 years ago, we have come to recognize that nature is the foundation of our security and our prosperity. Every day, we are reminded of the importance of protecting fresh water, food, life-saving medicines, fertile soils, and other services that nature provides to humanity. Nature's ability to provide these essential services will be further tested as the world's population grows from 7.3 billion to an expected 9.6 billion by 2050.

The direct connection between resource scarcity, wildlife crime, and U.S. economic and national security interests has never been clearer.

- Wildlife trafficking has grown into an \$8-10 billion global illicit enterprise that provides funding and weapons for terrorist and rebel groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army, al-Shabaab, and Janjaweed.
- The value of elephant ivory and rhino horn is so high on the black market that poaching activities are threatening the very existence of these and other iconic species.
- Poaching activities are undermining eco-tourism that has a broader economic benefit to civil society and supports the existence of these iconic species.

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is also directly connected to our economic and national security interests.

- IUU fishing is entrenched in the networks of traffickers and smugglers engaged in transnational organized crime.
- IUU fishing is an illicit activity that amounts up to nearly 30% of the documented global fisheries catch and has a market value of up to nearly \$24 billion annually.
- During the early 21st century, the depletion of fish stocks off the coast of Somalia and the wider Horn of Africa coincided with the rise of piracy and the disruption of global shipping commerce. The rise of the piracy crisis in Somalia demanded significant involvement by the U.S. Navy and international partners to address the threat of piracy and re-open global shipping channels.
- Although increased naval involvement has reduced ship hijackings off the coast of Somalia, illegal fishing networks have been linked to the flow of weapons to al-Shabaab, and maritime risks have arisen in other African countries such as Benin, Nigeria, and Senegal.

Water scarcity in the developing world provides the foundation for conflict that undermines civil society.

- Water scarcity presents significant risks to U.S. and global security. The 2012 Intelligence Community Assessment on Global Water Security concluded that water problems over the next decade will contribute to instability in countries important to U.S. national security interests.
- Water scarcity will exacerbate local conflicts in countries of strategic importance to the United States.
- Economic growth and human livelihoods depend upon secure water supplies. Nearly 70% of water withdrawals globally are for the agriculture sector, which accounts for nearly 35% of the world's total labor force. As an illustration of the importance of water to national economies, 60% of water consumed in Botswana is used for mining and agriculture, which together generate nearly one-fifth of the country's total GDP. More than 15 developing countries generate at least 80% of their electricity from hydropower and rely on sufficient clean water to sustain manufacturing and other industries.

Illegal logging and deforestation have far-reaching negative consequences, from detrimental impacts to the U.S. timber industry to the ecosystems that provide access to life-saving medicines.

- Illegal logging creates enormous economic impacts. Illegal logging and wood processing are estimated to generate between \$30 - \$100 billion annually, representing between 10-30% of the total global wood market.
- Illegal logging depresses global prices for timber up to 16% and costs the U.S. forest products industry more than \$500 million annually.
- Illegal logging and forest products trade fund terrorism and organized crime. Recent international monitoring investigations have documented large-scale illegal charcoal

exports from Somalia, generating tens of millions of dollars in annual revenues for the terrorist organization, al-Shabaab.

- Beyond economic costs, illegal logging destroys the ecosystems where much of modern medicine is derived.
- Globally, more than 70,000 different plant species are used in traditional and modern medicine.
- In the United States, half or more of the most prescribed medicines originate directly from natural sources or provide nature-based templates for new life saving drugs.
- According to the National Cancer Institute, an estimated 70% of the plants with anti-cancer properties grow in rainforests. The rosy periwinkle, a flowering tropical plant from Madagascar, revolutionized the treatment of Hodgkin's disease and childhood leukemia, resulting in significantly improved survival rates for both cancers.

For these reasons, Conservation International supports Congress's continued funding and support of international conservation programs. As the Subcommittee develops the fiscal year 2017 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill, we respectfully request continued strong funding for the following accounts and programs:

Wildlife Trafficking: U.S. appropriations are supporting vital efforts to combat poaching, transnational crime, and black market demand for illegal wildlife.

Global Environment Facility (GEF): The GEF unites 183 countries, including the United States, in partnership with the private sector, international institutions, and nongovernmental organizations to fund international conservation. Many GEF programs directly benefit the economic and national security interests of the United States by protecting natural ecosystems and the goods and services they provide to people. The GEF's investments in natural resource management are helping to reduce instability that results from resource scarcity. Impressively, U.S. investment in the GEF yields a very high rate of return; for every U.S. dollar invested, about 34 additional dollars are raised from public and private partners, including donor recipient countries. The GEF has established an impressive track record of delivering positive results for reducing security threats and providing sustainable economic development around the world.

Development Assistance (DA): Development Assistance funding is used to achieve long-term U.S. foreign policy objectives, such as sustainable development and democratic reform. Many DA funded international conservation programs are located in regions that are of economic and political significance to the United States.

Biodiversity: Biodiversity funding has supported vital conservation work that has promoted stability and sustainable land management in regions of strategic importance to the United States. In the Congo Basin of Central Africa, for instance, U.S. biodiversity funding has helped to expand protected areas covering more than 12.5 million acres of tropical forest and improve timber production practices on more than 13 million acres. In the Coral Triangle region covering Indonesia, the Philippines, and other countries in Southeast Asia, U.S. biodiversity funding has supported marine conservation and sustainable fisheries that are essential to the economic and food security for the region's 130 million people.

Thank you for your commitment to advancing international conservation and development and to recognizing the direct connection between resource scarcity and U.S. economic and national security. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything we can do to assist in your efforts.

**Submitted Testimony of the Wildlife Conservation Society
House Appropriations Subcommittee State, Foreign Operations, & Related Agencies
March 24, 2016**

Contact: Kelly Keenan Aylward, WCS Washington Office Director kaylward@wcs.org

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the FY2017 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act regarding U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Biodiversity, Combating Wildlife Trafficking, the Global Environment Facility (the GEF), USAID Sustainable Landscapes, and USAID Emerging Pandemic Threats accounts. The Bronx Zoo-based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) was founded with the help of Theodore Roosevelt in 1895 with the mission of saving wildlife and wild places. Globally, WCS aims to conserve the world's largest wild places in 15 priority regions, home to more than 50% of the world's biodiversity. WCS manages more than 200 million acres of protected lands around the world, employing 4,000 staff including 170 PhD and DVM scientists. WCS is appreciative of the bipartisan support in Congress for critical USG foreign aid programs that address international wildlife conservation and combat wildlife trafficking; and takes this opportunity to express a heartfelt thank you for the corresponding funding levels reflected in the FY16 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

U.S. government investments in international conservation promote U.S. national and economic security objectives in foreign policy. As an implementing partner of the U.S. government overseas, WCS is closely involved with a myriad of development activities that promote natural capital that sustains our societies, our economies, and the planet's ecological systems. At the same time, increasing pressures on natural resources and biodiversity loss are driving scarcity, attracting large-scale criminal and terrorist related activities around wildlife poaching, overfishing, timber trafficking, and lawlessness. Groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army and Sudan's Janjaweed undermine the rule of law and rob developing countries of economic opportunities. Often the same syndicates involved in wildlife trafficking are linked to other transnational organized criminal activities, including trafficking in drugs, weapons, and humans.

Good governance is the foundation of stability and thus security in countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. In such countries, where large segments of the population live in distant rural areas and rule of law is limited, good governance must begin at the community level and build outward to link with government. Rural communities in Afghanistan and Pakistan are largely, if not entirely, dependent upon natural resources – rangelands, forests, rivers – for their livelihoods. Therefore, building governance institutions at the local level based on improving natural resource management is a way forward toward increasing stability and security – one that local people will enthusiastically support. WCS, first with the support of USAID, and now the GEF, has helped build nearly 100 new governance institutions in Afghanistan and Pakistan based on natural resource management. These are now legally registered with the government, creating a platform for the development of co-management systems that improve the delivery of services to these communities – and through these links, increases stability, security, and the reach and rule of law.

As the Congress and the Subcommittee develop the budget for FY17, it is important to note that international conservation comprises less than 1% of U.S. foreign assistance, which, in turn, is less than 1% of the federal budget. This modest investment in sustainable natural resource management in places like Afghanistan, Burma, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Guatemala, Peru, Tanzania, Vietnam, and elsewhere strengthens local, often rural rule of law and governance around natural resources and promotes local livelihoods. This testimony will focus on programs at the U.S. State Department, USAID, as well as the U.S. Treasury's contributions to the GEF, which implement programs to promote stability, rule of law, and counter-trafficking.

USAID Biodiversity: The USG is a global leader in biodiversity, forest, and marine conservation investments, which are delivered largely through the USAID Biodiversity Program and prioritized around the recently released USAID Biodiversity Policy. These programs help protect some of the largest and most at-risk natural landscapes and the livelihoods of millions of people who directly depend on natural resources for their survival and economic growth. Partnerships by USAID, foreign governments, the private sector, local peoples, and conservation organizations leverage additional investments and build good-will toward the United States around the world. While the FY17 Administration's Request is \$148.5 million, WCS recommends \$265 million for USAID Biodiversity in FY17, the FY16 enacted level.

In Central Africa, despite a long history of conflict, **the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE)** brings 6 nations and many U.S. government agencies together to save Africa's elephants and great apes through a suite of initiatives aimed at combating wildlife crime, and in particular the trafficking of ivory, and supporting land-use planning and sustainable development practices in order to reduce deforestation and degradation and improve local livelihoods and wellbeing. CARPE is the primary vehicle for U.S. government investment in the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, an international initiative with more than 40 governmental and non-governmental partners. The latest implementation phase has shifted from establishing use-rights through multi-stakeholder land use plans to building anti-poaching capacity in elephant and great ape landscapes, developing new public-private partnership models for protected area management, and in strengthening counter-trafficking measures at national and transboundary scales. While the Administration's FY17 CARPE request is a combination of Biodiversity and Sustainable Landscapes funding at \$26.2 million, WCS recommends \$39.4 million, the FY16 enacted level.

Indigenous territorial management in Northern Bolivia through the **Initiative for Conservation in the Andean Amazon (ICAA)** has reduced deforestation along roads four-fold in comparison to neighboring areas. This reduction has been achieved through the development of consensus around land use; implementation of forest management projects including handicrafts, ecotourism, forestry, and agro forestry initiatives; development of internal natural resource use regulations; and implementation of a territorial control strategy based on physical delimitation of vulnerable perimeters and community control. This reduction in deforestation represents 1,400 hectares per year and five million total CO₂-equivalent between 2008 and 2015. While the FY17 Administration request is unclear, WCS recommends \$20 million for Andean Amazon, the FY16 enacted level.

Guatemala's Maya Biosphere (MBR) is the largest intact forest in Central America, rich with archeological sites and indigenous peoples dependent upon the forest for their livelihoods. With close proximity to the northern border, the forest – and fires set in and around it – serve as cover for the trafficking of many illegal commodities. WCS trains park rangers in law enforcement, species monitoring, and carbon counting. Home to the largest remaining scarlet macaw population, the forests and protected areas are monitored closely for disruptions that would spread disease to the macaw hatchlings or increase habitat loss from deforestation. The technical assistance and partnership provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior's International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) enables WCS to strengthen governance, build capacity of park rangers, and protect the forests from fire. In FY17, WCS recommends \$1 million directly apportioned to DoI's ITAP for the Maya Biosphere Reserve, the FY16 enacted level.

U.S. Forest Service International Programs (FS-IP) promote sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation internationally by linking the technical skills of the field-based staff of the Forest Service with partners overseas to address the most critical forestry issues. FS-IP regularly leverage the internal expertise of its wildlife biologists, forest economists, hydrologists, disaster and fire management specialists, and policy makers to build capacity in foreign countries. Some of the world's most threatened forests in the Amazon, Congo, Russia, and Indonesia are undergoing improved forest management while forest sustainability policies are being promoted in other forests around the world. WCS and others, in partnership with FS-IP are recovering habitats of the world's endangered Siberian tiger, monarch butterfly and panda. In international trade, FS-IP work to level the playing field for U.S. timber by reducing the amount of illegal or underpriced timber on the world market. In FY17, WCS recommends \$5 million directly apportioned to the USFS-IP, the FY16 enacted level.

Combating Wildlife Poaching and Trafficking: The illegal trade in endangered wildlife products, including ivory, rhino horns, pangolins, tiger parts, shark fins, turtle shells, and other parts, is worth at least an estimated \$8 to \$10 billion annually. Increasing profits and low deterrence associated with wildlife trafficking is attracting greater involvement of criminal and terrorists groups – the same organized crime groups engaged in trafficking drugs, people, and weapons. The U.S. State Department has reached 1,000 law enforcement and wildlife officials benefitting more than 30 countries, while USAID implements 60 programs in 25 countries to combat wildlife trafficking including 30 new programs to strengthen global enforcement.¹ Diplomatic efforts have resulted in the U.S. and China making a joint commitment to close domestic markets in ivory. Programs to alter consumption patterns and change civil society attitudes toward ivory have driven a global conversation encouraging other governments to destroy stockpiles and reduce demand.² WCS works in partnership with USAID and U.S. State Department INL to implement anti-poaching, law enforcement, and capacity building programs around investigations and border patrols, prosecutions, and convictions in Vietnam, Peru, and Africa. Park rangers and anti-poaching patrols are being trained in SMART, the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool, to log and geo-reference patrol routes, poaching incidents, and criminal evidence to target law enforcement efforts to the greatest threats. While the

¹ U.S. National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking 2015 Annual Progress Assessment, p. 10-12, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/254013.pdf>.

² *Id.*, p. 21-23.

Administration's FY17 request includes \$41 million to combat wildlife trafficking at USAID and the U.S. State Department, WCS recommends \$80 million of which \$40 million is directed to U.S. State Department's INL, the FY16 enacted level.

The Global Environment Facility (the GEF): The U.S. is one of more than 30 donors to the GEF where about 1/3 of all funds are directed to biodiversity conservation in the developing world. For every \$1 provided by the U.S. government the GEF and its partners are able to leverage nearly \$32 in support and/or in-kind contributions. Just last year the GEF announced \$90 million for a new program of work to combat wildlife trafficking in Africa.³ WCS is a partner of the GEF in Burma, Afghanistan, and elsewhere to develop national or regional scale natural resource management strategies. While the Administration's FY17 request is \$146.6 million, WCS recommends the U.S. Treasury transfers \$186.3 million, the FY16 enacted level, to the GEF to honor its pledge and pay down past owed dues.

Sustainable Landscapes: Forests are essential for regulating water flow, capturing rainfall for drinking water, and often preventing catastrophic flooding and soil erosion. Forests supply direct food, economic resources, and medicinal products to the over 1.6 billion people who live in them, and are vital to the healthy ecosystems we all depend on. Sustainable Landscapes support for reducing deforestation through sustainable management practices helps to protect these essential storehouses of biodiversity and carbon, as well as the essential goods and services that they provide people around the globe, including the United States. U.S. support will give developing countries the ability to address the drivers of deforestation and degradation, halt illegal logging, and restore degraded lands. This has direct economic benefits for U.S. producers as well: unfair competition from illegally harvested timber in developing countries costs the U.S. timber industry \$1 billion annually. While the Administration's FY17 USAID Sustainable Landscapes request is \$105.9 million, WCS recommends FY16 enacted levels of \$123.5 million. As U.S. contributions to the **Green Climate Fund** commence it will be important to sustain funding levels for bilateral aid through the USAID global climate change programs.

USAID Emerging Pandemic Threats (EPT) Program: These investments fight the emergence of zoonotic diseases that spread between people and animals by building essential human and institutional capacity to detect and prevent disease transmission at its source, and controlling its spread locally and across borders regionally and globally. Since 2009, the PIOET/EPT Program has collected samples from over 56,000 wild animals at high risk interfaces and discovered 815 novel viruses from wild animals in countries where the risk of disease emergence is high. The governments of Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, and Bolivia were assisted by USAID EPT-funded partners in responding to disease outbreaks. The program has built viral family diagnostic capacity in 32 labs in 20 developing countries around the world; and more than 2,500 human, animal, and environmental health professionals from 35 countries have been trained in biosafety, field epidemiology and surveillance, laboratory diagnostics, social sciences and behavioral risk investigations, and modeling and analytics, creating an extensive network of global One Health professionals to

³ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/06/04/gef-approves-new-90-million-grant-program-for-global-partnership-supports-wildlife-conservation-and-sustainable-livelihoods>.

support long-term zoonotic disease surveillance and outbreak response. Sustaining these investments is essential for U.S. national security and public health interests. In FY17, WCS supports the Administration's Request of \$72.5 million for the Pandemic Influenza and Other Emerging Threats (PIOET) Office, in USAID's Global Health Bureau, which is level with FY16 enacted levels.

In conclusion, WCS appreciates the opportunity to share its perspectives from operating on the ground conservation programs as well as consumer-based awareness raising campaigns in the U.S. In order for continued U.S. government leadership to be exhibited, U.S. investments to combat wildlife trafficking, protect biodiversity, and provide technical expertise in natural resource management and associated **federal programs, funding levels must be maintained with at least FY16 enacted levels within the FY17 SFOPs Appropriations Act.** Conservation investments are in our national security and economic interests and assist in building capacity, strengthening governance and stabilizing regions prone to conflict and unrest.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Neeraj Mistry, MD, MPH
Managing Director
Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases
Sabin Vaccine Institute

Before the
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
March 24, 2016

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and Members of the Subcommittee, it is my pleasure on behalf of the Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases, an initiative of the Sabin Vaccine Institute (Sabin), to submit this written testimony to the Subcommittee to discuss the fiscal year (FY) 2017 budget request and the critical global health issue of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). First and foremost, we thank the Subcommittee for your steadfast commitment to global health and ask, as you consider future investments in our nation's foreign assistance programs that you continue to show strong support for the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) Program. We request an increase in FY 2017 funding for the NTD Program from \$100 million enacted in FY 2016 to \$125 million for FY 2017.

This increased amount will allow USAID to further maximize the benefits of increased drug donations received from pharmaceutical companies since 2012, conduct impact assessment surveys to measure progress, and continue to implement this successful public-private partnership, while also continuing to make needed investments to ensure that new discoveries make it through the pipeline and become available to people who need them most. The \$13.5 million cut proposed in the President's FY 2017 request would only serve to reverse many of the NTD elimination results achieved so far. As evidenced by the devastation caused by recent infectious disease outbreaks, including Ebola, chikungunya and the Zika virus, it is paramount that we increase our efforts to combat NTDs and other infectious diseases—not only to eliminate these diseases of poverty, but also to bolster the health systems of these NTD endemic countries to better combat new and emerging threats.

As you know, NTDs threaten 1.8 billion people across Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, including more than 800 million children. These diseases cause blindness, crippling disability, malnutrition, stunted growth, delayed cognitive development, and increase the likelihood of contracting HIV. New disease burden estimates indicate that NTDs are among the leading global health problems across the developing world thwarting opportunities for social progress and economic growth.

NTDs continue to have devastating consequences for maternal and child health, access to education, and general health and nutrition, and yet continue to be recognized as a “best buy” in public health costing as little as 50 cents per person per year. Thanks to the generous drug donations from leading pharmaceutical companies, like Merck & Co. Inc., GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, and Eisai and the efforts of USAID's innovative NTD Program, a unique public/private partnership has been formed to efficiently and cost effectively address NTD control and

elimination. Since FY 2006, the NTD Program has improved the lives of over 687 million people, delivered more than 1.4 billion NTD treatments, and trained over 500,000 community workers. It has exceeded expectations in its ability to deliver treatments for the seven most common NTDs—ascariasis (roundworm), trichuriasis (whipworm), hookworm, schistosomiasis (snail fever), lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis), trachoma, and onchocerciasis (river blindness), leveraging more than \$11.1 billion worth of donated medicines and operating in 25 countries including Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Nepal, and Sierra Leone.

This year the NTD Program celebrates its 10th anniversary. The progress over the past four years, in particular, has been remarkable in striving to reach the goals of the London Declaration on NTDs—a partnership which includes the United Kingdom, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 13 pharmaceutical companies and the United States. Since the London Declaration, pharmaceutical partners have donated more than 5.5 billion tablets, providing over 3.5 billion treatments. In 2014, treatments increased by 8.5% from the previous year, with more than \$1.45 billion treatments made available to countries in need, making this the largest public health drug donation program in the world. Thanks to collaborations like these, we are beginning to see positive results: a growing number of endemic countries are achieving elimination goals, more people are reached with treatments, and the national ownership of NTD programs is increasing. In addition, NTD partners continue to use a comprehensive London Declaration Scorecard to promote accountability, transparency, and evidence-based prioritization. However, significant funding gaps to implement comprehensive NTD control and elimination programs remain and without continued support by existing partners, as well as redoubled efforts to attract new bilateral partners, scale up implementation, and increase global resources, we will not achieve the 2020 target goals. It is estimated that the annual global funding is over \$220 million per year. That is why funding for USAID's NTD Program must remain steady and, the inclusion of NTD control measures within other USAID programs or among broader U.S. government programming should also be considered. Opportunities for cross-sectoral coordination may include maternal and child health services delivery platforms (e.g., childhood immunizations, vitamin supplements), water, sanitation and hygiene programs, as well as food security and nutrition initiatives. Greater investment in NTD-related research and development is also needed to support the introduction of new technologies (e.g., drugs, vaccines and diagnostics) to ensure the achievement of the goals of disease control and elimination, and address the urgent needs of particularly neglected patient populations, including those suffering from NTDs with the highest death rates.

We applaud the United States government's ongoing commitment and vital dedication to the NTD cause, which has been instrumental in inspiring similar efforts by partner countries to initiate control programs and allocate funding. It is important to note that, if funding for USAID's NTD Program is cut to the budget level proposed in the President's FY 2017 budget, the capacity to deliver the increased drug donations to those who need them most will be significantly reduced and we may see a resurgence of many of these NTDs. Furthermore, the momentum generated over the past few years could well stall if the United States steps back from its global leadership role in NTD control and elimination efforts. We urge you, therefore, to vigorously support this successful public/private partnership that will benefit not only the developing world, but will ultimately benefit the economic prosperity and national security of the United States by helping to lift millions across the globe out of a vicious cycle of poverty and disease.

We thank the Subcommittee for your outstanding leadership on this issue and the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding USAID's NTD Program and the FY 2017 budget.

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Written Testimony by Bishop Oscar Cantú
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to the
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
March 24, 2016

On behalf of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I thank the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs for this opportunity to submit testimony on appropriations for FY 2017. Together with Catholic Relief Services, our overseas relief and development agency, we urge you to preserve funding for the international poverty-reducing humanitarian and development accounts specified in the table below that address factors that cause or exacerbate poverty such as health, infrastructure, armed conflict, and forced migration.

Agency	Account	Amount in \$,000
USAID	Maternal Health and Child Survival	\$814,500
USAID	Nutrition	\$230,000
USAID	Vulnerable Children (orphans and displaced)	\$30,000
USAID	HIV/AIDS (USAID Programs)	\$330,000
USAID	Malaria, TB, Global Health Security & other NTDs	\$1,095,000
DOS/PEPFAR	HIV/AIDS (State Funding/PEPFAR)	\$5,670,000
USAID	Development Assistance (including water, education)	\$3,100,000
USAID/OFDA	International Disaster Assistance	\$2,794,184
DOS/PRM	Migration and Refugee Assistance	\$3,600,000
DOS/PRM	Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance	\$100,000
USAID	Complex Crises Fund	\$50,000
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation	\$1,000,000
DOS/IO	Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities	\$2,394,930
DOS/IO	Peacekeeping Operations	\$475,391
DOS/IO	Peace Operations Mechanism	\$150,000
DOS/IO	Green Climate Fund	\$750,000
DOS/IO	Combatting Trafficking in Persons	\$56,000

Generous and effective international assistance is a moral imperative to assist “the least of these” by promoting human life and dignity, advancing solidarity with the poor, and enhancing human security in our world. Such aid gives life to our values as a nation and is an essential component of United States leadership in the world.

In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis argues, “The need to resolve the structural causes of poverty cannot be delayed, not only for the pragmatic reason of its urgency for the good order of society, but because society needs to be cured of a sickness which is weakening and frustrating it, and which can only lead to new crises... Inequality is the root of social ills” (#202). He calls on all nations to express true solidarity with the poor and to address the growing inequality in the world, an inequality that “eventually engenders a violence which recourse to arms cannot and never will be able to resolve” (#60). He also stresses that among the poorest

and most abandoned are migrants and refugees” who need more humane conditions and need the causes of their migration to be addressed. (*World Day of Migrants & Refugees (2015)*).

The American public shares a commitment to people in poor developing countries. A 2010 World Public Opinion survey found that Americans believe international assistance is about 25% of the federal budget. When asked what percentage would be more appropriate, people say about 10%. The actual amount of the federal budget allocated to international assistance is approximately 1%, while the accounts that the USCCB supports total only about 0.5%. We urge you to protect international assistance that reflects our country’s generosity, saves lives, and reduces instability and widespread forced displacement.

Reflections on Foreign Aid Reform Elements

We would like to offer some strategic recommendations on how the United States can rebalance and refocus its international assistance for better results. Woven throughout these recommendations is a common theme that we believe will improve the effectiveness of international assistance. **We strongly recommend that the United States design and develop a systematic and strategic partnership with American civil society, in particular faith-based organizations, and further increase its support to civil society and faith-based communities in the developing world. We also urge the United States to invest more resources in conflict prevention in the fragile countries of the world, particularly in Africa and Latin America.**

1. Towards a more just balance among defense, diplomacy and development with a greater emphasis on conflict prevention.

Poverty-reducing assistance is not only a moral imperative; it is also a direct investment in peace and stability in our world, contributing to the security of all. As Pope Benedict XVI taught in his 2009 World Day of Peace Message, “to fight poverty is to build peace” (#15). Pope Francis agrees: “Today in many places we hear a call for greater security. But until exclusion and inequality in society and between people are reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence....” (*The Joy of the Gospel*, # 59). Shortly after the 9/11 attacks our Bishops’ Conference warned, “Our nation must join with others in addressing policies and problems that provide fertile ground in which terrorism can thrive.” We urge our political leaders to look beyond a limited focus on counter-terrorism to address the poverty and powerlessness that make some people easier recruits for violence and terror.

Poorly governed and impoverished countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, are often the most vulnerable to violence and civil conflict. The war in Somalia, terrorist attacks in Nigeria, and the activities of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb have led observers to declare Africa a new front in the struggle against terrorism. The rise of terrorist groups in Africa and the resultant loss of lives are not solely the result of ideology; they are also the consequence of poor governance, mismanagement of latent conflict, and crushing poverty. While police and military initiatives attempt to halt terrorist attacks, the United States and its allies must not limit their response solely to military operations.

In Afghanistan and Iraq, two other fragile countries, the United States has spent enormous resources on a military approach to ending conflict. The brave men and women of the American armed forces have done everything asked of them, yet the Afghan and Iraqi people are far from living in peace. It is clear the U.S. strategy must be broadened to include much greater investment in U.S. diplomacy, such as the promotion of inclusive and responsive government, peace talks among warring parties, and dialogue and reconciliation between opposing ethnic communities. We urge you to increase diplomatic and conflict resolution capacity in places where the United States is also involved militarily. We also urge USAID and other development bodies to integrate peacebuilding programming more fully into their work. It is important to increase the capacity of the State Department Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations to prevent and address conflict and injustice. Congress should also expand peacebuilding funding for the USAID Office of Transitional Initiatives, Conflict Management and Mitigation, and the Complex Crises Fund. We recommend that you call for a review and renewal of these initiatives to build greater coordination and more efficient management. These improvements will develop their ability to prevent conflicts and their negative consequences before they occur, to mitigate them when conflicts do occur, and eventually to foster peace, prosperity and justice. These offices should also place a much greater priority on partnering with, and strengthening, civil society and faith-based institutions as discussed below.

A new strategy must also promote greater investment in human development and local civil society and faith-based efforts to consolidate peace and prosperity. This requires increases in allocations to the development accounts listed above that reduce poverty and build peace.

2. Towards a more just balance in U.S. government support to local government, private enterprise and civil society

A healthy, prosperous and peaceful society has three essential social components: an inclusive, democratic and responsive government; a robust and fair private enterprise sector; and a vibrant, organized and effective range of civil society institutions that promote the common good of the people. The ability of governments to meet their responsibilities to their citizens must be developed, but it is critical that civil society be strengthened to help hold governments and businesses accountable. Greater investments in developing civil society, human rights, freedom of the press, freedom of religion and other democracy-building activities are investments in sustainable peace, prosperity and stability.

Local civil society and faith-based groups play crucial roles in promoting integral human development. In poor developing countries, church groups are particularly close to the poor, and are trusted institutions. Faith-based development institutions offer health care, education and community development in areas where governments often have no effective presence. Strong civil society and faith-based groups act as the critical third pillar of social development in addition to government and private enterprise. Faith-based groups can help hold governments accountable to their people and act as checks on corruption and state abuse of power. The experiences of Burundi, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) show the importance of free and fair elections, but democracy is more than elections. During our past visits to the DRC, our Committee has seen how a strong faith community can help hold its government answerable to the people. In 2011 the Catholic Church along with other

civil society groups forced the DRC parliament to ensure that elections were not simply an expression of ruling party power, but rather would reflect the voice of the people.

In states transitioning out of, or in the midst of, conflict such as the DRC, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, and South Sudan, it is incumbent on civil society, and particularly faith-based groups, to help ensure that governments build inclusive and effective structures. Religious groups are well-placed agents of reconciliation among peoples and groups struggling to overcome past conflict and its trauma. Reconciliation rights wrongs, heals trauma, and restores social cohesion - all of which are essential elements for long-term sustainable peace. It is crucial for resolving protracted refugee and IDP situations. The U.S. Government should increase its support to faith-based groups and civil society peacebuilding efforts in places like Burundi, DRC, Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan to sustain peace once the fighting has stopped.

3. Towards a Strategic Partnership with American Civil Society and Faith-based Groups

The most effective way to build faith-based communities and a strong civil society in the developing world is for U.S. Government agencies (**Department of State, USAID, MCC, Department of Agriculture, and others**) to **craft a strategic partnership with American civil society and faith-based organizations**. Government to government assistance and appropriate partnerships between American business and business firms in the developing world are important, but alone they are not sufficient to ensure poverty reduction and integral human development. For developing societies to promote the common good and reduce poverty, civil society and faith communities, the third pillar of a healthy society, must be empowered and strengthened. The United States should call on the best of American civil society and faith-based groups, such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), to help accomplish this goal. To this end, strong conscience clause protection that allows religious institutions to participate to the fullest extent possible, while maintaining their religious freedom, is essential. Faith-based organizations, which have significant local infrastructures, local trust, experience, and presence in remote areas, can use these strengths to promote development.

We urge the Administration to build more and deeper partnerships among the U.S. Government, American NGOs and local civil society to strengthen the work of Feed the Future and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Strong country ownership and in-country planning are elements of these two programs. To be authentic, **ownership must come from all parts of society, not just government**. Planning and implementation of these programs must include organizations that represent people living in poverty if these initiatives are to meet the goal of reducing poverty. Poverty reduction should be the ultimate goal of all U.S. assistance, including the MCC and Feed the Future. Rising GDPs are encouraging, but they must be accompanied by just income distribution that reduces poverty and marginalization.

One way to strengthen and promote American NGOs and faith-based groups is to **make USAID development programs more flexible and less onerous**. USAID should ensure that it funds community-based development programming through grants and cooperative agreements rather than contracts, as established by law. Successful and sustainable development programs depend on long-term local partnerships that are deeply rooted and promote local ownership and knowledge. This is facilitated by U.S. partners who have spent years developing collaborations

of mutuality with their in-country counterparts. Projects built on the bedrock of these partnerships guarantee local ownership and community buy-in and stand a much better chance of success. The best mechanism to support these community-based projects is through grants and cooperative agreements that respect the goals and the hopes of the local communities that design them. Grants and cooperative agreements also allow greater flexibility to respond to changing environments and complex working conditions.

4. Towards Greater Assistance to Fragile States

The MCC, Feed the Future, and the Global Development Alliance have targeted “well-performing” countries where designers believed impact would be significant. This strategy is based on valid assumptions. We urge the United States to prioritize poverty reduction in these country programs. **In addition, we urge the U.S. government to increase aid to other poorly governed countries.** The effort to reduce the number of countries where the United States is active means that there are a number of poor performing countries, particularly in Africa, that are marginalized, further deepening poverty. In these fragile states poverty is high, governance is flawed, and people are struggling to support their families in dignity. In states like Togo, The Gambia, Chad, the CAR and others, large, long-term development programs through local governments are not the best strategy. However, the United States can support American faith-based organizations, like CRS, other NGOs and their partners in these nations to defend the human dignity of people living in poverty. They can provide programs that care for refugees and the internally displaced and aid their return home. Together they can provide community-based health, education and agricultural services, and promote peace and justice to reduce poverty and defend human rights. In this way, the United States would demonstrate true solidarity with the poorest people in the poorest places at the same time that it strengthens civil society to help these nations move toward better performance. The people of these nations should not be locked out of major U.S. development assistance and thus locked into perpetual poverty and desperation.

5. Towards Greater Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in Fragile States

The United States, in collaboration with other nations, supports UN peacekeeping missions in countries like Sudan, South Sudan, the CAR and the DRC. These missions work in intractable conflicts under extremely difficult conditions, attempting to keep a peace that has not been fully consolidated. Despite the challenges, peacekeeping has made progress in CAR, the DRC, and more recently in South Sudan. Persistence, resources, international pressure and creativity are required if the fighting and the suffering are to end. **Besides the crucial peacebuilding mission, the United States must maintain its support to peacekeeping missions that protect human lives and ensure that conflict does not spread to other countries.** The United States should also ensure robust funding of a comprehensive strategy to build resiliency and facilitate durable solutions for the tens of millions of internally displaced people and refugees that have resulted from conflict in places like South Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Burma, and Afghanistan. The heart-rending images coming out of Turkey and Greece demand that we act to care for refugees’ needs and to accept as many of the most vulnerable as possible into the United States. The United States should also ensure that the fragile states and host communities impacted by migration are likewise supported and strengthened.



**TESTIMONY ON FY 2017 STATE DEPARTMENT FOREIGN
OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE HOUSE STATE, FOREIGN
OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE**

Michael Klosson, Vice President, Policy and Humanitarian Response
Save the Children

On behalf of Save the Children, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the needs of vulnerable children and families around the world, and on the critical role the United States can play in addressing them, while also advancing our national interests. Save the Children is a nonprofit, child-focused organization working in 19 states across America as well as in about 120 countries around the world. We build capacity for countries to deliver health, education, and protection for their citizens; we address critical needs in our humanitarian responses to man-made and natural disasters; and we advocate with partners for a better future for all children. All told, we reached 166 million children in 2014.

International development and humanitarian accounts work together to help ensure that children and families have the opportunity to survive and thrive and for countries to achieve the priorities they set for themselves through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are specific accounts that are particularly important to children and families, which Save the Children supports in the FY 2017 State, Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, including:

- \$880 million to fund the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Account
- \$230 million for the nutrition-specific USAID account within Global Health Programs
- \$6.404 billion for humanitarian accounts, including \$2.8 billion for International Disaster Assistance (IDA) and \$3.604 billion for Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA)
- \$1.2 billion for Feed the Future (FtF)
- \$800 million (bilateral) for basic education programs for children overseas and an additional \$70 million for the Global Partnership on Education (GPE)
- \$1.5 billion for USAID Operating Expenses

Save the Children supports robust funding for the 150 account and opposes deep and disproportionate cuts to a set of programs which represents only about 1% of the budget – a sliver of overall discretionary spending. Save the Children is also concerned by the shift of core funding out of the base account into Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding. At a time when we face many challenges around the world that will not diminish

in the foreseeable future and tight budget constraints, it is more important than ever to remember that the well-being of our nation is inextricably linked to creating a more stable and prosperous world that this investment supports. We are dedicated to working with Congress to support and maintain investments in international development and humanitarian programs, ones that leverage contributions from other governments. When the U.S. stands up, other nations and often the private sector pitch in.

We appreciate Congress' robust funding for our shared priorities in the FY 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act, particularly for maternal and child health, nutrition, and humanitarian programs. U.S. leadership in these areas has made a significant impact: Child deaths in developing countries are down by more than half since 1990; global hunger is down by more than 34 percent since 1990; stunting – an indicator of malnutrition among children – has dropped in some USAID priority countries, such as Ghana, by as much as 33 percent. U.S. support is enabling communities to develop resilience and has helped millions rebuild their lives after natural disasters and other crises: In Syria, U.S. government assistance is reaching 5 million people per month.

These programs not only have tremendous impact on improving our world, but they also advance U.S. security and economic interests. Nearly half of all U.S. exports now go to the developing world – representing 95% of the world's consumers and supporting over 10 million American jobs. Ten of America's top 15 trading partners were once recipients of foreign aid. Our leadership and influence is challenged when our investments are outpaced by other countries who fill the void.

We urge the Committee to do its best to protect funding at robust levels for these critical programs that impact children and project strong U.S. international leadership.

Maternal and Child Health: We are at a pivotal time in history where we have the evidence, knowledge, and imperative under the SDGs to end preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths within a generation. This goal is achievable, but requires strong support for critical child survival and nutrition programs. The programs funded by this account have contributed to unprecedented success. Over the past two decades, child mortality has dropped by more than 50 percent globally, and maternal mortality has dropped by over 45 percent globally. They also help build the capacity of local health systems to meet the needs of mothers and children. With U.S. assistance, almost a billion cases of child diarrhea are treated each year, more than 100 million children receive basic immunizations, and 75 million infants and children with pneumonia receive treatment. The increased resources requested by the President would enable the U.S. to meet its commitments to Gavi -- the Vaccine Alliance -- as well as increase core funding for programs that treat diarrhea and other childhood illnesses.

Nutrition: We note with appreciation the Committee's strong support for nutrition. Addressing malnutrition in children is key to increasing economic growth and ending preventable child deaths. Malnutrition is the underlying cause of 45 percent of child deaths under the age of five. Chronic malnutrition causes stunting, which results in lifelong cognitive and physical deficiencies. Small investments can go a long way. For

example, in just three years, the U.S. has helped Bangladesh reduce stunting by 14 percent in children under 5 in the areas that the U.S. provides assistance. In just four years, Cambodia has reduced stunting by 21 percent in U.S. focus areas. This summer, on the eve of the Olympics, world leaders will gather in Brazil for a global summit on nutrition to make financial and policy pledges. To maximize the impact of U.S. funding, we are urging the U.S. to increase funding in the nutrition account in FY 2017 to \$230 million. This relatively small investment by the U.S. will unlock additional resources from the UK government, leverage resources from other donors, and help mobilize domestic resources from countries most affected by malnutrition.

Children in Emergency and Conflict Situations: Children are always the most vulnerable in any conflict or emergency. About 6 million Syrian children, for example, inside Syria and in neighboring countries are in need of humanitarian assistance. There is a risk of a lost generation if their education and protection needs are not met, with all that could entail for Syria's emergence from its current chaos. Robust investment in the MRA and IDA accounts will enable the U.S. to continue addressing the increased needs posed by humanitarian crises. When disasters strike, these funds ensure that vulnerable populations around the globe have access to health, food, clean water, safe shelter, and other life-saving assistance. With the U.S. Administration hosting and actively cultivating new and emerging donors at the September summit in New York on the global refugee crisis, U.S. leadership on humanitarian accounts is needed now more than ever. Cutting U.S. contributions to humanitarian response could have drastic consequences, hobbling the ability of the U.S. to respond fully to crises in areas such as the Middle East and short-changing assistance in other places of acute need such as countries affected by El Niño or conflict, such as Ethiopia and Yemen. The reduced ability of the U.S. to provide support for people displaced by conflict or natural disaster, or to conduct programs aimed at supporting vulnerable women and children in conflict, would undermine U.S. efforts to build stability in critical places. Continued U.S. commitment to adequate levels of funding for humanitarian and child protection purposes is thus important both for the well-being of the most deprived and marginalized and for creating more secure societies around the globe.

Hunger and Food Security: Feed the Future (FtF) is a whole-of-government strategy aimed at tackling global hunger and malnutrition through high-impact approaches that improve agricultural productivity, expand markets and trade, prevent child malnutrition, and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable people. FtF requires robust funding to scale up its results and achieve its ambitious goal to reduce poverty and child stunting by 20% in the 19 FtF priority countries by leveraging work done by all relevant U.S. federal agencies and offices. FtF has consistently achieved or surpassed most objectives, including working with millions of small scale producers, including women farmers, to adopt improved technologies or practices, and getting critical nutrition programs to 12 million children. We are thankful to the House of Representatives for passing the *Global Food Security Act of 2014* and are hopeful that both the House and Senate will pass the bill (H.R. 1567, S. 1252) this session.

Basic Education (bilateral) and Global Partnership on Education (GPE): We thank the Committee for being a staunch champion for basic education funding over the years. Education is a core foundation for sustainably moving countries out of poverty. However, approximately 124 million children and youth remain out of school, and over 35 percent of out-of-school children live in areas affected by conflict. Considerable challenges to education include not only access but also equity and quality. Support for basic education is critical to ensure the U.S. government reaches its goals of improving reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades and increasing equitable access in crisis environments for 15 million children. If all students in low-income countries completed school with basic reading skills, 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty. In addition to U.S. bilateral funding, the Global Partnership on Education (GPE) also deserves strong U.S. support.

USAID Operating Expenses: Robust funding for the USAID Forward agenda, USAID Operating Expenses, and a Working Capital Fund will allow key foreign assistance reforms to move forward and strengthen programs. This provides a strong foundation for all of the investments in programs and policies delivered by USAID. Proper funding for USAID will help ensure effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars by modernizing our implementation and procurement systems and rebuilding the capacity for USAID to make smart choices. By increasing USAID's capacity to evaluate programs, we can ensure U.S. foreign assistance programs are based on strong evidence in order to have the most impact for children and their families in the developing world.

Conclusion: We thank the Subcommittee for its continued leadership on U.S. humanitarian and development programs and its demonstrated strong support for these priority programs in the FY 2017 appropriations process. Save the Children appreciates this bipartisan support for programs that are essential for fighting poverty and giving children at home and around the world a fair chance in life. We ask for your continued partnership with us to invest in children so they have what every child deserves – the right to survive and thrive.

FY'17 Written Testimony by Peter Yeo, President, Better World Campaign

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your strong support in FY 2016 for UN and global health related accounts. I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of a robust FY 2017 State/Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. The accounts funded by this legislation support U.S. dues assessments for the UN Regular Budget, UN Peacekeeping Budget, and a number of other critical UN activities, as well as bilateral and multilateral global health interventions. We specifically recommend \$2.445 billion for the Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) account, \$475.4 million for the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) account, \$150 million for the Mechanism for Peace Operations Response (MPOR), and \$1.387 billion for the Contributions to International Organizations (CIO) account in FY 2017. We also support the inclusion of language that enables us to pay our contributions to UN peacekeeping operations at the full assessed rate, as well as language allowing the U.S. to restore funding for UNESCO. We support robust funding for voluntary UN agencies, including: the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) at \$55 million, UNICEF at \$132.5 million, and UN Women at \$14 million. We also support fulfillment of our pledges to the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria at \$1.35 billion and Gavi at \$275 million. Finally, we would like to request robust funding for a number of key bilateral Global Health accounts which are enhanced by our multilateral contributions: polio at \$59 million, the Presidents Malaria Initiative at \$874 million, and reproductive health and family planning at \$593.5 million. We also request that all restrictions in funding for UNFPA be removed.

Sustainable Development Goals

Last year, the U.S. was instrumental in the negotiations that created a new set of global goals—agreed to by all 193 UN member states—to end extreme poverty by 2030. Building on the success of the Millennium Development Goals, these new goals are more inclusive and recognize the broader set of inputs that are necessary to achieve lasting change. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals, or Global Goals, were agreed upon with input from civil society, faith-based organizations, the private sector, and grassroots from around the world including Americans. They mirror bipartisan U.S. priorities including global health, education, governance, peace and security, climate change, and economic growth. The reliance on data and commitments from all countries to achieve these goals means that our foreign assistance and development priorities will be leveraged with other contributions and made more effective. From governments aligning their domestic resources, to private sector commitments to focus on these issues to expand their markets, the Global Goals are a framework to connect to the broader global community in a more integrated way.

Funding for UN Peacekeeping—CIPA

For more than 70 years, the UN has endeavored to protect global peace and security, promote universal human rights, and build a healthier and more just world. While the UN's work covers a kaleidoscope of issues and occurs in a wide range of contexts, perhaps the most visible manifestation of the UN's commitment to multilateral cooperation and collective solutions to complex international challenges are its peacekeeping missions.

UN peacekeeping has evolved substantially since the first mission was dispatched to the Middle East in 1948. Initially conceived as a relatively light-footprint exercise, most of today's operations have large numbers of personnel, more complex mandates, and often operate in areas where there is little actual peace to keep. These shifts—strongly supported by the U.S. under both Democratic and Republican Administrations—have placed the UN under increasing strain, as it struggles to meet an ever-growing need for qualified troops and police and adequate force enablers. In spite of these challenges, however, UN peacekeepers have been able to claim noteworthy achievements in recent years. For example, UN missions in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire played a central role in ensuring stability and facilitating free and fair elections in these countries. As a result, both missions are currently drawing down.

In other theaters of operation, UN peacekeepers will likely face a number of unprecedented challenges over the coming year. In South Sudan, UN forces are protecting nearly 200,000 civilians who have sought refuge at UN bases in order to escape a brutal civil war. In Mali, peacekeepers working to secure that country's vast northern region have increasingly come under threat from radical Islamist groups, with 51 UN personnel killed in attacks since 2013. Further south, UN peacekeepers are helping to neutralize armed groups in eastern Congo and maintain stability ahead of national elections later this year.

None of the UN's multifaceted work in these areas would be possible without U.S. financial support, and I would like to thank the Subcommittee for its longstanding commitment to funding our nation's UN peacekeeping dues. In order to keep the U.S. current on its dues in FY'17, BWC is recommending \$2.445 billion for CIPA. In addition to fully funding CIPA, we request the inclusion of legislative language lifting the peacekeeping cap and allowing our nation to pay its dues at the full assessed rate of 28.57%.

On this last point, we must acknowledge that the U.S. does pay a higher proportion of the UN's peacekeeping budget than any other country. Nevertheless, it is also important to keep these figures in perspective. With nearly 125,000 personnel serving on 16 missions, UN peacekeeping constitutes the largest deployed multinational military force in the world. Despite the sheer scale and geographic breadth of these activities, however, the UN's peacekeeping budget accounts for a mere 0.5% of annual global military spending, and the amount requested for CIPA is around half the total 2016 budget of the state of Delaware. Given the size of these missions, the complexity of the tasks assigned to them, and the increasingly dangerous environments they are deployed to, our nation's financial investments in UN peacekeeping are actually quite modest.

It is also worth noting that while the U.S. is the largest financial contributor, other countries contribute in other ways. For example, the U.S. provides very few uniformed personnel to UN operations (76 U.S. police and military personnel currently serve on these missions). This deficit is covered by countries like Ethiopia, Jordan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Morocco, Senegal, Ghana, and Tanzania, who collectively contribute tens of thousands of personnel every year. This highlights the fact that UN peacekeeping is, at its core, an exercise in burden sharing, or, in the words of U.S. Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power, "Peacekeeping gets other countries to stand up, rather than stand by." In order to keep reaping the benefits of this system of international cooperation, the U.S. must continue paying its dues.

Finally, I would like to address an issue that I'm sure is very much on your minds. Over the last year, the UN has been rocked by a series of horrific allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) involving peacekeepers. These allegations have rightly led to renewed calls for reform, and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is currently working to implement a variety of measures to combat these shameful and appalling crimes. These policy changes include: expanding UN vetting mechanisms to cover all uniformed personnel; requiring the UN to conclude its own SEA investigations within 6 months; "naming and shaming" individual UN member states by publishing country-specific data on the number of SEA allegations against uniformed personnel; establishing a trust fund to assist victims; suspending reimbursement payments to troops alleged to have committed SEA; repatriating entire military or police units to their home countries when there is evidence of "widespread or systematic" abuses; and replacing entire peacekeeping contingents from countries that fail to properly investigate allegations or hold perpetrators accountable. While these and other recently announced reforms represent a step in the right direction, cooperation from all countries will be critical to ensuring that they are effectively implemented. In addition, the U.S. must exert bilateral pressure on countries that have come up short on investigating and disciplining SEA offenses to improve their records.

Mechanism for Peace Operations Response (MPOR) and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)

BWC would like to support the Administration's request for two other critical peacekeeping-related accounts: MPOR and PKO. MPOR—first proposed by the Administration in FY'15—would fund urgent new peacekeeping needs. Crises can erupt at any time, without regard to the U.S. budget cycle. The MPOR could be an effective way to deal with potential funding challenges created by emergency situations, providing the U.S. with budgetary flexibility to respond quickly when new or expanded peacekeeping operations are needed even if they were not solidified at the time of the President's budget. With regards to PKO, we recommend \$475.4 million in FY'17. This account supports several regional peacekeeping initiatives, including voluntary funding for the AU Mission in Somalia. The President's PKO request also supports the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, which seeks to build the rapid response capacities of six African countries to help them more quickly deploy in crisis situations.

Contributions to International Organizations (CIO)

In addition to continuing our crucial investments in peacekeeping, we recommend full funding for the CIO account, which covers U.S. dues payments to the UN Regular Budget and 40 other international organizations, including NATO. The UN Regular Budget supports the body's core functions, and serves as a particularly effective example of the strategic and financial value of U.S. engagement with the UN, as other member states pay nearly 80% of the cost. The Regular Budget finances, among other things, UN political missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya that are directly in our national interests and working to promote stability in key regions of the world. CIO also funds U.S. dues payments to the WHO, IAEA, and other UN specialized agencies. Finally, we support the Administration's request for a legislative waiver allowing the U.S. to fund UNESCO, which promotes education, freedom of the press, scientific innovation, and other core U.S. values and interests around the world.

Expanding Access to Global Childhood Immunizations

The world has made great strides in reducing preventable childhood deaths through investments in immunization programs. Immunizations have saved the lives of more children than any other

intervention in the last 50 years, with approximately 2.5 million deaths averted each year. With partners like Gavi, UNICEF and others, the U.S. is working to meet its goal of ending preventable childhood deaths by 2035 by fulfilling its position as a global leader in the fight to eradicate polio, decrease global measles mortality, and strengthen immunization systems in developing countries.

Since its inception in 2000, Gavi has helped to immunize half a billion children, saving seven million lives. As one of Gavi's original six donor countries, the U.S. has played a vital role in supporting this impact. Gavi is playing an increasingly important role in immunization procurement and we request that Gavi be funded at \$275 million in FY'17. In complement to Gavi's work, U.S. financial support for UNICEF helps the agency reach and save the world's most vulnerable children. For more than 50 years, UNICEF has been a world leader in immunizations, partnering closely with the U.S. and other countries to increase vaccine coverage equity and access, improve supply chain management, and engage community leaders at the regional and local level. In 2012, UNICEF supplied 1.9 billion vaccines to 96 countries. We request that Congress fund UNICEF at \$132.5 million in FY'17.

As a result of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, polio infection has dropped 99.9% since the 1980s, and the world is nearly polio-free. Nigeria has stopped transmission of wild polio and was removed from the list of endemic countries in September 2015, leaving only two countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan, with sustained transmission. Thanks to substantial progress in 2015, the world has never been in a better position to eradicate polio. Using innovative approaches and with the help of new partners, this year we are on course to meet important milestones in the Polio Endgame Strategy to stop transmission. To ensure that these results can be achieved, we request \$59 million in funding for polio eradication efforts for USAID.

Ending Malaria Deaths

There are more than 200 million cases of malaria each year, killing over 600,000 people—mostly children under the age of five in sub-Saharan Africa. Malaria is preventable and treatable; lives do not have to be lost to this disease. Due in large part to U.S. leadership, significant progress has been made in the fight to end malaria. Insecticide-treated bed nets are one of the most cost-effective tools to prevent and control the spread of malaria. When used properly, bed nets can prevent malaria transmission by up to 90%. The World Health Organization estimates that increased prevention and control measures have led to a reduction in malaria mortality rates by 47% globally since 2000, and by 54% in Africa alone. We are at a critical moment in time where a surge in capacity can have a profound impact on the fight to end deaths from malaria. In addition, U.S. bilateral and multilateral efforts to combat malaria complement and amplify each other. These efforts also help strengthen health systems and train health workers to allow countries to better respond to public health emergencies, serving not just to aid in the fight to end malaria, but to end diseases such as Ebola as well.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has been a vital tool to protect, diagnose, and treat people living in malaria endemic countries. The original multi-year commitment from the U.S. has been leveraged into millions of lives saved through the provision of 450 million bed nets and 470 million treated cases of malaria in the last decade. Currently, the Global Fund has assessed its financial need to provide critical resources to countries fighting

AIDS, TB and malaria at \$15 billion over the years 2014-2016. We ask that the President's request of \$1.35 billion be appropriated to allow the Global Fund to continue leveraging the full U.S. contribution at \$2 for every \$1 provided by other donors – completing the U.S. commitment to the 2014-2016 replenishment.

Working hand in hand with PEPFAR and the Global Fund, the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) continues to provide life-saving resources in the 19 focus countries as well as the Greater Mekong Subregion. Contributions to PMI have been used to holistically combat malaria through indoor residual spraying with insecticides, procurement and distribution of insecticide treated bed nets, intermittent drug preventive treatment for pregnant women, and diagnosis and treatment of malaria with artemisinin-based combination therapies. As one of most successful bilateral global health initiatives, we believe the Committee should continue their strong, bipartisan commitment to ending malaria deaths and fund PMI at \$874 million.

Saving Women's Lives and Gender Empowerment

Today, 225 million women want to prevent or delay pregnancy but face significant barriers to accessing modern contraceptives. Around the world, nearly 300,000 women die annually from largely preventable complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. Fulfilling the unmet need for family planning and providing quality maternal and newborn care could reduce maternal deaths by 67 percent. As the largest bilateral donor to international family planning and reproductive health programs, the U.S. plays a critical role in providing contraceptive services to the millions of women who currently lack access.

To help meet this need, we request the Committee support our bilateral reproductive health programs at \$593.5 million and UNFPA at \$55 million for a total of \$648.5 million on the path to contributing the full \$1 billion necessary to meet the unmet need. UNFPA is working in more than 150 countries and serving girls, women and families in humanitarian crises from the Syrian civil war to the Zika outbreak. Unfortunately UNFPA's funding was cut in the final omnibus appropriations bill so we request a return to FY10 funding levels for UNFPA, our highest level of funding, and an end to all restriction on funding for UNFPA.

The funding appropriated for FY2015 made it possible for 28 million women and couples to receive contraceptives; 6 million unintended pregnancies to be averted; 2.4 million induced abortions to be averted; and 12,000 maternal deaths to be averted. These investments not only save and improve lives, but are also highly cost-effective: for every additional dollar invested in contraception it will result in \$1.47 saved in pregnancy related care and have been shown to be key to giving women and girls more access to economic opportunities, education, gender equality and improved health.

The U.S. helped to form UN Women and has served on its board since its founding. Unfortunately, the current level of appropriations did not allow for the U.S. to meet the threshold necessary to remain one of the top five contributors to UN Women, forcing the U.S. to relinquish their seat on its Executive Board. UN Women plays an important role in creating policies to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, empower women, and achieve gender equality. We believe we should support UN Women at \$14 million in FY17 so we can return to the Executive Board and continue strong U.S. leadership in this vital agency.

**Testimony Prepared for the House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs**

FY 2017 Appropriations for Global Basic Education Programs

Jennifer Rigg, Executive Director, Global Campaign for Education – US

On behalf of the Global Campaign for Education-US (GCE-US), a diverse coalition of more than 80 organizations working to ensure quality education for all, we urge you to support effective investments in education globally by allocating \$800 million to basic education and \$125 million for the Global Partnership for Education in the FY 2017 State and Foreign Operations Bill. This funding is vital to ensure that the United States continues to play a leadership role in the effort to achieve quality education for all.

The power of education is clear – brighter futures, healthier communities, and increased economic growth for individuals and countries. For every \$1 spent on education, as much as \$15 can be generated in economic growth. Individual earnings increase by 10 percent on average for each year of school completed. Support for quality early learning and education yields even greater impact: increasing preschool enrollment in sub-Saharan Africa would generate an estimated \$33 in increased wages for every \$1 invested. U.S. partnerships with developing countries have helped to build stronger education systems and drastically decreased the number of out of school children around the world.

However, 124 million children and youth remain out of school worldwide, and roughly half live in conflict zones or fragile areas. Even among those children who do make it into a classroom, a staggering global total of 250 million kids – nearly 40 percent of the world’s children of primary school age – can’t read a single sentence.

Globally, in 2015 alone more than 80 million children and young people had their education disrupted or destroyed by emergencies and prolonged crises. Record numbers of attacks on schools, natural disasters, wars and the largest refugee crisis since World War II have increased the need for education in emergencies. Without a basic education, children are more vulnerable to the pull of extremist groups, at greater risk to infectious and deadly diseases, and more likely targets for forced labor, trafficking, and child marriage. Research has shown that each additional year of formal schooling for boys and young men reduces their risk of becoming involved in conflict by 20 percent. Wages rise 20 percent for every year beyond fourth grade that girls and young women are in school. Now is the time to support education and join with young people like Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani young woman and Nobel Peace Prize winner who risked her life demanding the right to quality education.

Investing in education is not only the right thing to do, it’s also a smart use of U.S. resources. Through education, children learn to read, write, think critically, and acquire the important life skills needed to lead their communities and lift themselves out of poverty. Education is a prerequisite for short- and long-term economic growth – no country has achieved continuous and rapid economic growth without at least 40 percent of adults being able to read and write. Countries that have experienced surges in literacy rates of 20-30 percent have seen simultaneous

increases in GDP of 8-16 percent. The economic growth spurred by education also enables countries to become stable trading partners for U.S. export markets.

In many countries, the school functions as the center of community life and a focal point for other development efforts, serving as a center for vaccinations, malnutrition and deworming efforts, hygiene education and promotion, and a source for clean water. In Africa alone, 4.5 million children die each year before reaching their 5th birthday, but children of mothers with a full primary education are 40 percent more likely to survive to age 5.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has played a leading role in providing education in the lowest-income countries, and U.S. contributions to GPE contribute to the development of sustainable national education systems owned and led by developing country partners. This important investment is also leading to increased domestic resource mobilization by developing country governments. Among GPE partner countries, there has been an 11% increase in domestic financing for education after the countries joined GPE. A \$125 million contribution to the Global Partnership for Education in FY2017 will be critical to support the education of 29 million children in the poorest countries around the world and will ensure that the U.S. continues to support national education systems that deliver quality education.

This year also provides several key opportunities for the U.S. government to lead in ensuring educational opportunities for children affected by emergencies, conflict, and protracted crises. In May 2016, at the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit, world leaders will launch a new education crisis platform. The platform will include a Breakthrough Fund to begin to adequately finance efforts to meet the educational needs of millions of children and young people affected by crisis. This launch in May and the September 2016 U.S.-led Refugee Summit will provide the United States with opportunities to make new, multi-year pledges aimed at funding the platform and urging others to join in this effort, so that it can truly be a breakthrough for children living without education in the most dangerous or unstable contexts.

Continued bipartisan congressional commitment to this issue positions the United States as a leader in global progress towards quality education for all. By allocating \$800 million to basic education and \$125 million for the Global Partnership for Education in the FY 2017 State and Foreign Operations Bill, Congress can ensure millions more children have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The need has never been more great, and U.S. global funding for education is especially vital in the year ahead.

Testimony of Nick Larigakis, President, American Hellenic Institute (AHI)
Fiscal Year 2017 Appropriations Bill
Submitted to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and
Related Programs – March 24, 2016

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to submit testimony to the Subcommittee on behalf of the nationwide membership of the American Hellenic Institute on the administration's proposed FY2017 foreign aid budget.

In keeping with the best interests of the United States we oppose: (1) any military assistance the administration will request for Turkey until Turkey withdraws all of its troops and illegal Turkish settlers in Cyprus; (2) aid the administration will request for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM); and (3) any reduction that might be introduced in the aid levels for the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. 2016 is an important year for Cyprus settlement talks. Should a settlement to reunify Cyprus be reached via referendum, United States foreign assistance can help solidify a reunified Cyprus and its government during the post-referendum transition period.

U. S. Interests in Southeast Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. The U.S. has important interests in southeast Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. With Greece's centuries enduring presence, its close cultural, political and economic ties to the Mediterranean countries, including Israel; Western Europe, the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, Greece is strategically situated in a vital region for U.S. interests and an ideal strategic partner for the U.S. To the north of Greece are the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Russia, to the East is the Middle East, and to the South are North Africa and the Suez Canal. Significant commerce and energy sources pass through the region. In promoting a multilateral approach to diplomacy and foreign policy, the U.S. should look to Greece as an immensely valuable link in this region. However, the projection of U.S. interests there depends heavily on the region's stability. Therefore, the U.S. has a stake in fostering good relations between two NATO allies, Greece and Turkey, and in achieving a just and viable settlement to the Cyprus problem.

Greece is important for the projection of U.S. strategic interests in the region by virtue of its geographic location and by being home to the most important U.S. military facility in the Mediterranean Sea, NSA Souda Bay, located on Crete. Military installations located at Souda Bay include the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre (NMIOTC) and the NATO Missile Firing Installation (NAMFI).

- **The two-week trilateral naval exercise "Noble Dina 2015" between the U.S., Greece, and Israel, held April 29, 2015 off of the coast of Souda Bay, Crete, is a prime example of Greece's strategic importance to U.S. interests in the region.**

Moreover, in 2015, more than 70 U.S. Navy and NATO ships and vessels visited Souda Bay and more than 2,830 U.S. Air Force and NATO planes utilized the 115th Combat Wing on Crete. Also, more than 65 U.S. ships and more than 1,200 trainees utilized NMIOTC.¹ To illustrate Souda Bay's importance, during U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, tens of thousands of aircraft used over-flight access. During one, two-year period nearly 30,000 allied flights traversed Hellenic airspace. In the NATO buildup for Libya, Souda Bay spokesperson Paul Farley said of the 400 U.S. Marines deployed there that they were "part of contingency planning to provide the president [Barack Obama] flexibility on full range of option regarding Libya" along with the amphibious assault ships USS Kearsarge and USS Ponce.²

¹ "Souda Bay: NATO's Military Gem in the Eastern Mediterranean," Dr. Daniel Goure, Lexington Institute, March 2016.

² "U.S. troops arrive in Greece in Libya buildup," *USA Today* as reported by the *Associated Press*, March 3, 2011.

When then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Athens, July 17, 2011, she said, *"...I am pleased to be here during these challenging times to demonstrate unequivocally the strong support that the United States has for Greece. We know that we are your friend and we are your ally and we are proud to be both....As a NATO ally, we appreciate Greece's partnership on a shared agenda that spans the globe....Our diplomatic and military efforts are gaining momentum, and we are grateful for Greece's engagement and support, especially your willingness to host coalition military assets at Souda Bay and other sites close to Libya."* She also expressed appreciation for Greece's support in speaking against an attack on the U.S. embassy in Syria.

Moreover, on March 25, 2011, President Obama re-affirmed Greece's contributions as a NATO ally, including in support of NATO's operations in Libya:

"And as we celebrate the independence of the Greek people, the United States and Greece are standing with our NATO allies to support the Libyan people as they stand up for their own freedom."

In addition, Greece is a top contributor to the defense efforts of NATO, spending an estimated 2.46% of its GDP on defense in accordance with NATO standards despite battling two crises, economic and migratory. The United States, United Kingdom, Estonia, and Poland are the only other NATO allies that meet the two percent minimum standard. Greece is second behind only the United States.³ Greece is also an active participant in peacekeeping and peace-building operations conducted by international organizations, including the UN, NATO, the EU, and OSCE. It should also be noted Thessaloniki was NATO's main sea and airport of debarkation during crises in the former Yugoslavia. Moreover, Greece was involved in Afghanistan by offering personnel for security and training purposes. Greece also participated through donations of equipment, millions of euros, and transportation services.

A key to peace and stability in the region is for Greece and Turkey to have good relations with one another, promote democratic ideals and principles, and maintain growing economies. However, Turkey's continuing occupation of Cyprus, its intransigence in solving the Cyprus problem, and its refusal to recognize the Republic of Cyprus (a prerequisite to Turkey's E.U. accession process), which is a member of the European Union; are detrimental to U.S. interests. Furthermore, Turkey's bellicose threats against Cyprus, and in recent years, against Israel, which is working in collaboration with Cyprus and a U.S. energy company to develop hydrocarbon reserves found within their exclusive economic zones (EEZs), also threaten U.S. interests. For a six-month period (fall 2014 to spring 2015), Turkey elevated tensions in the eastern Mediterranean by sending warships into Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and by issuing a NAVTEX that stated it would begin seismic surveys.

Because of threats in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, AHI contends the U.S. must lift its arms embargo on Cyprus⁴, which would allow Cyprus to consider the U.S. as a marketplace for defense procurement. It is in the best interest of the United States that the Republic of Cyprus maintains its Western orientation and it is preferred that the Republic of Cyprus turn to the United States to procure its defense materials.

Furthermore, instability in the region continues to be exacerbated on a consistent basis with Turkey's ongoing violations of Greece's territorial water and national airspace in the Aegean. In 2014, there were 3,045 total violations of Greek national airspace and Infringements of Air Traffic Regulations (ICAO) that resulted in eight engagements with Hellenic Air Force interception fighters, according to the Hellenic National Defense General Staff.⁵ The examples are egregious. On March

³ http://www.nato.int/nato_static/fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_01/20160129_160128-pr-2016-11-eng.pdf#page=2

⁴ Eastern Med Statute [22 USC sec 2373(c)(1)] and [57 Federal Register No. 244, December 16, 1992].

⁵ Hellenic National Defense General Staff, http://www.geetha.mil.gr/index.asp?a_id=3954

1, 2015, Turkey unilaterally issued a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), a move to reserve extensive airspace over the Aegean Sea for military maneuvers that Greece protested.⁶ On March 3, 2015, Turkey canceled the NOTAM thanks to pressure from the U.S. and NATO. Obviously, Turkey's act was a test of the new Greek government that dangerously and recklessly raised tensions. On July 15, 2015, six Turkish fighters crossed into Greek airspace 20 times – in a single day.⁷ On February 15, 2016, six Turkish fighter jets and a CN-235 maritime patrol aircraft violated Greek airspace 22 times – again, in a single day.⁸ These multiple, reoccurring actions cost the Greek government approximately \$400 million a year and come at a time when it can ill afford to be spending any amounts of money unnecessarily to deal with provocative actions by a fellow NATO ally.

Finally, Greece adds stability to a volatile region by helping the U.S. bring economic development to it. Over recent decades, Greece invested more \$22 billion in the countries of the region, which created more than 200,000 new jobs and contributed more than \$750 million in development aid.

Turkey. We oppose any aid for Turkey and any other assistance programs from the United States. This includes most favored nation trade benefits including textile quotas and the transfer of any nuclear related assistance which we oppose as not in the best interests of the U.S. We also oppose the notion of Turkey's inclusion in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). We contend such benefits should be conditioned on Turkey meeting the following conditions: (1) the immediate withdrawal of all Turkish troops from Cyprus; (2) the prompt return to Turkey of the over 180,000 illegal Turkish settlers in Cyprus; (3) the Turkish government's safeguarding the Ecumenical Patriarchate, its status, personnel and property, reopening the Halki Patriarchal School of Theology, and returning church properties illegally seized; and (4) the cessation of violations against Greece's territorial integrity in the Aegean. Of course, Turkey's ongoing human rights, freedom of speech, and religious freedom violations are problematic.

Finally, in the interest of regional stability and conflict resolution, the U.S. should promote Turkey's emergence as a fully democratic state whether or not she enters the EU. This will require fundamental changes in Turkey's governmental institutions, a significant improvement in its human rights record, the settlement of the Cyprus problem on the terms referred to above, and publicly acknowledging the existing boundary in the Aegean Sea between Greece and Turkey established by treaties. Past and current U.S. policy has not had this effect and needs to be reviewed critically by Congress.

Cyprus. We strongly support the president's FY17 request of \$9.55 million for the UN Peacekeeping Force for Cyprus. Despite some noted progress of settlement talks, the illegal occupation of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkish troops remains. The Turkish-occupied area, which amounts to 37.3% of the territory of Cyprus, is one of the most heavily militarized areas in the world with the presence of 40,000 Turkish occupation troops. As long as the Republic of Cyprus remains under Turkish military occupation, a strong UN peacekeeping force must be maintained on the island.

The United States stated its perspective on the current Cyprus settlement talks in a February 11, 2014 White House statement issued after a Joint Communiqué was signed by the Republic of Cyprus and Turkish Cypriot community:

"We encourage the sides to work expeditiously to resolve the outstanding core issues and achieve a settlement that reunifies Cyprus as a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation at the earliest possible time...The United States welcomes President Anastasiades' proposal for a

⁶ http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsitel_1_03/03/2015_547849

⁷ Turkey buzzes weakened Greece, <http://www.politico.eu/article/turkey-buzzes-weakened-greece-military-airspace/>

⁸ Turkish Warplanes Violate Greek Airspace Ahead of NATO Sea Operations, <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2016/02/16/turkish-warplanes-violate-greek-airspace-ahead-of-nato-sea-operations/#sthash.gxTzrTtc.dpuf>

package of bold and innovative confidence-building measures and other constructive proposals, which have the potential, when agreed and implemented by the parties, to dramatically enhance cooperation between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and restore faith in settlement efforts."

Following his historic May 21-22, 2014 visit to Cyprus, Vice President Joe Biden bolstered the U.S.-Cyprus partnership stating, *"The relationship is now a genuine, strategic partnership, and it holds even greater promise."* He also reaffirmed the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus stating: *"The United States-I want to be clear about this-recognizes only one legitimate government of the Republic of Cyprus, and my visit and meetings throughout the island will not change that. It is my personal position. It's the position of the United States of America, and it's the position of the entire world-save one country."*⁹

Congress can assist the Republic of Cyprus by reaffirming the United States' position that assistance appropriated for Cyprus should support measures aimed at solidifying the reunification of Cyprus and the unified government in Cyprus. Specifically, the United States can play an active role and should facilitate a successful reunification of Cyprus through assistance to Cyprus. It would provide a settlement with a chance to succeed. Therefore, AHI recommends the following language be included in Title III of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 in the Fiscal Year 2017 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill:

Any assistance provided to Cyprus under this Act must be used to contribute towards the [[cost of reunification]] or [[property compensation fund]], support and underpin the new federal structures of a reunified island, assist with constructing a strong unified Cypriot economy able to cope with the new challenges, and strengthen the cooperation between the two communities on Cyprus in a way agreed to between the United States and Cyprus.

Additionally, Congress can help by calling on Ankara not to manipulate the direct talks, but instead, support the talks constructively through rhetoric and tangible steps. The Cypriots themselves should have ownership of the process and the Cypriot people should arrive at a solution that is for the Cypriot people, having full regard to the parameters of a solution as set out in the Joint Statement, for a bizonal, bicomunal federation, as well as the full respect of the principles and laws of the European Union, of which Cyprus is, and will remain, a member. However, this does not absolve Turkey of its responsibility as the occupying power to play a constructive role in resolving the Cyprus issue. In addition, Congress should echo the statement of then Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen who called for the immediate removal of Turkey's troops from Cyprus following a December 7, 2010 meeting with then Turkish Ambassador Namik Tan; a position she would reiterate in 2012 as committee chairman. Withdraw of Turkish troops from Cyprus would go a long way to solving the Cyprus problem because it would be a confidence-building measure that would create a more favorable environment.

AHI is also concerned with the security of energy prospects off the coast of Cyprus. AHI contends the U.S. must support the exercise of the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus to explore and develop the resources within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) free of any third-party interference and to underscore the importance of avoiding any threats or other actions or statements that escalate tension. During his visit to Cyprus, Vice President Biden said, "And Cyprus is poised to become a key player in the Eastern Mediterranean... transforming the Eastern Mediterranean into a new global hub for natural gas and markets."¹⁰

⁹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/21/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-press-lamaca-international-airport>

¹⁰ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/22/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-official-lunch-president-nicos-anastasi>

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). We strongly oppose the president's proposed \$6.9 million ESF FY2017 aid to FYROM as long as it is not tied-in to FYROM's commitment to negotiate in good faith with Greece to find a solution to the continuing unresolved issue between Greece and FYROM over the name of the latter. Instead, we strongly support language included in Section 935 of H.R.2583 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, which passed the House Committee on Foreign Relations in the 112th Congress in July 2011. It stated:

Section 935. Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This section expresses the sense of Congress that the provision of United States assistance to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia upon that government's willingness to engage in meaningful discussions with the government of Greece to resolve the ongoing dispute over what shall be its official name. This section also prohibits the use of U.S. funding for any activities which support any incendiary rallies, rhetoric, or propaganda by either the FYROM government or private entities, including educational materials that promote inaccuracies regarding the history and geography of Greece and FYROM.

It is FYROM that is the intransigent party on the name-recognition issue and not Greece. FYROM's provocations against Greece are an affront to Greece and its citizens. Since August 2006, Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski has followed a long-term policy of extreme nationalism against Greece—*most often through infrastructure*—in conflict with European values. We have a serious concern that ESF funds (which are provided for a variety of economic purposes, like infrastructure and development projects) to FYROM will be utilized to build infrastructure aimed to continue to provoke Greece. Gruevski's actions are a breach of the U.N.-brokered Interim Accord and erode efforts to build trust and good neighborly relations. Unfortunately, the irresponsible decision by the Bush administration in November 2004 to recognize FYROM as the "Republic of Macedonia" has contributed greatly to FYROM's intransigent and provocative stand. It was a disrespectful act toward a staunch NATO ally, Greece. Despite this, it should be noted that Greece is a major investor in FYROM, helping to sustain the latter's precarious economy. Congress can address this issue by persuading FYROM to negotiate in good faith with Greece to resolve the name issue and to cease irredentist propaganda against Greece. Only in this way will FYROM's aspirations to fully integrate into the transatlantic community be realized. If left unresolved, this issue will contribute to potential instability in the Balkans.

Finally, the current refugee crisis in Greece is exacerbated thanks to FYROM's border closing, which has in essence trapped some 45,000 migrants in Greece who wish to move on to other parts of Europe through the Western Balkan corridor.

Greek American Policy Issues. The issues facing the U.S. in its relations with Greece, Cyprus and Turkey are detailed in AHI's Policy Statements available at [www.ahiworld.org](http://www.aheworld.org). In addition to the issues presented in this testimony, they include: the treatment of the Greek minority in Albania and recognition of the Greek Pontian genocide.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our written testimony to the Subcommittee.

**Written Statement to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations and Related Programs**

on the FY 2017 President's Budget Request for Global Health Programs

Submitted by Mark Feinberg, MD, PhD

President and CEO of the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI)

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the President's Budget request for Fiscal Year 2017. My name is Mark Feinberg and I am President and CEO of the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), headquartered in New York. IAVI is an international nonprofit product development partnership whose mission is to ensure the development of safe, effective, accessible, preventive HIV vaccines for use throughout the world. The President's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget request includes \$28.7 million to continue support for IAVI's longstanding partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Reflecting on 20 years of progress

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of IAVI's founding. In 1994, just over a decade into the HIV epidemic, a group of experts gathered in Bellagio, Italy to identify and find ways to address the major barriers to developing a preventive HIV vaccine. The meeting identified a set of persistent market failures driven by two major themes. First, demand for a preventive AIDS vaccine resided mainly in the developing world, meaning that the usual financial incentive for industry to invest the necessary time and resources to develop a vaccine was largely absent in the case of HIV. Second, and relatedly, AIDS vaccines that were under development at the time did not address the needs of developing countries, where the epidemic was, and continues to be, most severe. It was clear that a new vehicle would be required to move the field forward.

In order to blend the best of the public and private sectors, IAVI was established two years later as a product development partnership, combining the strengths of a mission-driven nonprofit with a clear product-development focus. Since our founding, we have continually fostered innovative partnership approaches to bring about productive collaboration between public and private sector organizations in the developed and developing world. These partnerships address key research gaps, leverage resources, and spur creative and impactful scientific discovery and product development strategies to accelerate the search for an AIDS vaccine. Over the last two decades, IAVI has worked with academic and industry partners around the world to develop more than 30 AIDS vaccine candidates, advancing the most promising to clinical trials and refining our candidate portfolio with knowledge gained from each trial. While much has changed in the global approach to the AIDS pandemic since IAVI's founding 20 years ago, the one constant is that the development of an effective vaccine to prevent HIV infection represents the most promising, and likely only viable path, to truly end AIDS. We could not have sustained

this work towards this essential goal without the steadfast support of Congress and the strong commitment of our partners at USAID. Thank you.

I would like to address three points in this statement. First, an AIDS vaccine would be a game-changer in the effort to end the global epidemic, especially for women. Second, IAVI is refining its unique product development model to spur innovative science and cultivate partnerships for the benefit of the AIDS vaccine field and beyond. Finally, as we move further down the path to a vaccine, IAVI's longtime partnerships in Africa are building clinical research capacity and strengthening health systems today that will provide important and durable benefits for HIV and other prevention research going forward.

An essential tool for ending the pandemic

IAVI's vision is a world without AIDS. Despite tremendous advances in prevention and treatment in recent years, nearly 5,500 people still are newly infected with HIV each day, and the rate of infection continues to be exceedingly high in specific populations and regions – including areas of the U.S. South. Even with great strides in expanding treatment rolls, nearly 60 percent of people living with HIV in 2014 did not have access to treatment, leaving major gaps in our ability to control the epidemic as people are most infectious before they know they are infected.

Women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of this disease, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Women are more susceptible to HIV infection than men and sociocultural factors such as child marriage, violence, and limited access to education exacerbate the problem. As a result, young women in sub-Saharan Africa are twice as likely to be living with HIV as their male peers and AIDS remains the region's number one killer of women of reproductive age. These grim statistics tear at the social fabric of whole communities: tragically, when a mother dies, within two years of her death, UNICEF studies conclude that her children are 10 times more likely to die themselves. The need for effective prevention tools for women is urgent.

Preventive vaccines are an important part of the solution. They are a proven public health investment that can be administered confidentially and would circumvent many of the barriers to HIV protection for women and other vulnerable populations who may live beyond the reach of traditional prevention and treatment services for structural, economic or social reasons. Recent modeling research, published in the scientific journal *PLoS ONE*, shows that an effective AIDS vaccine with strong uptake could reduce new annual HIV infections in developing countries by nearly half in its first 10 years and by 65 percent in 25 years, ultimately averting tens of millions of infections and saving millions of lives. As highlighted above, it is clear that an AIDS vaccine will be an essential tool in the fight to achieve a conclusive end to the pandemic.

Working in partnership to advance the science

As IAVI enters its twentieth year, there is reason for optimism in the search for an AIDS vaccine. Developing this vaccine remains a formidable scientific challenge – perhaps the

greatest of our time – but researchers are making groundbreaking progress in understanding HIV and its vulnerabilities, and tailoring vaccine candidates accordingly. New scientific approaches are being pursued with speed and rigor. We are actively pursuing new collaborations with both biotechnology companies and vaccine manufacturers that would accelerate our ability to test promising new candidates and technologies such as mRNA vaccine strategies, which, if successful, would reduce dramatically the time and cost involved in developing HIV vaccines.

IAVI is unique in the AIDS vaccine field in providing an end-to-end product development platform – spanning laboratory research, vaccine design, early development and clinical trials, and engaging at-risk communities to garner their preferences to inform the most effective product development strategies – to support advancement of promising vaccine candidates. Working with academic and industry partners, IAVI’s global, interdisciplinary product development teams are experienced in taking novel vaccine candidates from the research phase through manufacturing, clinical trial design, regulatory approval and into the clinic. IAVI serves as a catalyst and facilitator along this path, working across government, academia, industry and civil society partners to fill gaps in the product development process and ensure the translation of laboratory breakthroughs into promising vaccine candidates. Without this translational service, many promising candidates would not progress beyond the academic research laboratory.

This collaborative model has produced notable successes over the last two decades. In 2009, IAVI and partners discovered the first antibodies that work against the many strains of HIV circulating worldwide, moving the field an important step closer to solving one of the greatest challenges of AIDS vaccine development. Candidate vaccines resulting from this novel discovery have moved into early development in a cutting-edge line of research that may hold the promise of a globally effective vaccine. More recently, an HIV vaccine – based on the same platform as the novel Ebola vaccine developed by Merck & Co., Inc. that was shown to be 100% effective in a recent efficacy trial in Guinea – showed results in a preclinical study that are equal or better than any other HIV vaccine candidate in development. This result highlights the fact that investment in HIV vaccines has broad ranging public health impacts.

Our commitment to the pursuit of a globally effective HIV vaccine is unwavering. At the same time, we recognize that the collaborative model and expertise that reside at IAVI can be leveraged for the broader HIV prevention field, and indeed for the fight against a host of emerging infectious diseases that extend beyond HIV. As we move into the next five years, IAVI will advance new and creative models of multisector collaboration that will change the shape of the HIV vaccine field and serve as a model for addressing broader public health issues.

Building sustainable research capacity in Africa

Even as the science progresses and our model evolves, IAVI’s longstanding partnerships with clinical research centers in Africa are strengthening sustainable research capacity and building scientific leadership on the continent today. We are proud to partner with USAID in this effort,

which builds on the agency's long tradition of fostering advances in science and technology to benefit the world's neediest populations.

Over the last 15 years, with USAID support, IAVI has built a durable network of partner research centers in East and Southern Africa that are capable of conducting HIV vaccine trials and epidemiologic studies at the highest technical and ethical standards. Collectively this partner network has conducted 16 HIV vaccine and non-vaccine clinical trials in Africa to date, including the first HIV vaccine trials in Kenya, Zambia and Rwanda. Each of these trials has built local laboratory capacity and clinical research infrastructure in the process. Indeed, with technical guidance and support from IAVI, all Africa-based laboratories in our partner network have received the international gold standard accreditation for laboratory quality. This approach of engaging local researchers has established a new paradigm of vaccine development, one that ensures an HIV vaccine will be made available in a timely manner to the populations who stand to benefit the most.

In addition to laboratory and clinical research, IAVI and partners in Africa have conducted 21 groundbreaking epidemiological studies, including the largest longitudinal study conducted in Africa to date, in order to help identify and characterize populations most at risk of HIV infection and tailor vaccine candidates accordingly. We work with clinical partners to engage and educate communities where research is taking place and to ensure high quality onsite services and referral pathways for clinical trial volunteers, in collaboration with implementing partners of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). These efforts have provided voluntary counseling and testing to more than 500,000 individuals in sub-Saharan Africa over the last 15 years. By engaging communities devastated by HIV in the solution, we not only aim to increase scientific research capacity in Africa that can be applied to all manner of public health threats, but also to dramatically accelerate future delivery of an AIDS vaccine to those who need it most.

Pressing forward

Thanks to innovative science and strong partnerships – and due in large part to the steady financial commitment of this Subcommittee – the AIDS vaccine field is at a uniquely promising moment in its history. We are reimagining how the field should work and bringing in new partnerships and models of collaboration that will ensure that any HIV vaccine we design will be effective and relevant for populations most at risk, including women.

I urge you to support the President's FY 2017 Budget request of \$28.7 million for the IAVI-USAID partnership to ensure development of an AIDS vaccine. As IAVI marks its twentieth year, we are more committed to that goal than ever. We look forward with great anticipation to the day when an AIDS vaccine is a reality for those who need it most, and together we can mark a more profound milestone – the beginning of the end of AIDS.

**PUBLIC WITNESS TESTIMONY
CLIVE GILLINSON
EXECUTIVE AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
CARNEGIE HALL CORPORATION
MARCH 23, 2016**

On behalf of the volunteer leadership, the staff, and the millions of musicians and music lovers from around the world who are connected to Carnegie Hall, I am pleased to submit Public Witness Testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations. This testimony presents justification for expanded Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations (\$10 million) for the Department of State's Office of Citizen Exchanges.

Carnegie Hall's mission is to present extraordinary music and musicians, to bring the transformative power of music to the widest possible audience, to provide visionary education programs, and to foster the future of music through the cultivation of new works, artists, and audiences. Guided by its mission, the Hall also has an enduring commitment to cultivating and engaging the next generation of young artists, and to improving international cultural understanding through the arts, both of which are exemplified by several of our programs. For example, each summer the Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall brings together 120 of the finest young orchestra musicians, ages 16-19, from across the country to form the National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America (NYO-USA). Following a two-week training residency with leading professional orchestra musicians, these remarkable young musicians play a concert at the Hall before embarking on an international tour and serving as dynamic musical ambassadors.

Additional Carnegie Hall programming that fulfills these commitments includes Ensemble ACJW and Decoda. Ensemble ACJW is a program offered in coordination with The Juilliard School that selects young professional musicians for two-year fellowships. Fellowships support students in building careers as top-quality performers, innovative programmers, and dedicated teachers who fully engage with the communities in which they live and work. Decoda—an independent organization—is the alumni program of Ensemble ACJW through which Fellows continue their commitment to “giving back” in their respective communities. Decoda members work and perform in schools, hospitals, and prisons, as well as in prominent concert halls across the globe. Recent travels have taken the Decoda chamber ensemble to Abu Dhabi, Iceland, Japan, Mexico, Germany, Hong Kong, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Denmark.

The exceptional young artists in these programs also attract and engage the foreign and domestic diplomatic corps, which helps in magnifying the impact of this work. For example, when NYO-USA toured and performed in Russia, the Russian ambassador to the United States, Sergei Kislyak, invited NYO-USA participants to the Russian Embassy to celebrate the orchestra's tour. At the event, Ambassador Kislyak spoke of the significance of NYO-USA and its members as “youth ambassadors.” Similarly, when NYO-USA embarked on their 2015 seven city tour of

China, two diplomatic events were hosted in honor of NYO-USA. U.S. Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, Max Baucus, and Ambassador Zhang Qiyue, Consul General of the People's Republic of China in New York, hosted events in Beijing and New York City, respectively. Each acknowledged the power that music and the arts have to bring people together.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) at the State Department is responsible for the public diplomacy activities of the United States, including international cultural exchange programs. The Office of Citizen Exchanges (OCE), within ECA provides American and foreign participants the opportunity to gain knowledge, and share their expertise and experience through four separate divisions: youth programs, cultural programs, professional fellows, and sports exchange programs. The Youth Programs Division is tasked with empowering the next generation of leaders and establishing long-lasting ties between the United States and other countries through exchange programs and institutional partnerships. The Cultural Programs Division is tasked with bringing the rich artistic traditions of the United States to foreign audiences through cultural exchange programs in visual arts, performing arts, arts education, arts management, and cultural studies.

OCE received the same level of funding in FY2016 as it did in FY2010 (\$102 million), resulting in flat funding over a period of seven years. There is measurable value in increasing appropriations to the OCE Youth Programs Division to award competitive grants to organizations providing young musicians the opportunity and skills necessary to instill a sustained involvement in strengthening international cultural understanding through arts presentation.

Carnegie Hall supports the arts community's request to appropriate \$110 million to the Office of Citizen Exchanges for Fiscal Year 2017. The community is supportive of directing the State Department to dedicate increased resources to, and increase operational capacity within, the Cultural Programs Division to strengthen its ability to oversee grants and programs. We encourage the State Department to evaluate and publicly report on the impact, value, and success of arts diplomacy as part of its smart power strategies to build cross-cultural understanding.

Further, Carnegie Hall respectfully requests an additional \$2 million increase for competitive awards to organizations, like Carnegie Hall, which are engaging young artists to support improved international cultural understanding through citizen exchange, while actively involving the U.S. and foreign diplomatic corps. We specifically recommend that a \$2 million increase be directed to the Youth Programs Division to support new competitive awards, administered in cooperation with the Cultural Programs Division. The new awards would aid in funding youth orchestras and other youth ensembles which travel internationally to perform and interact with foreign youth artists.

As additional context for this recommendation, an October 2009 report by the New York University Brademas Center called for America to have a renewed role in cultural exchange and diplomacy.

“To these ends, [the] report recommends that international arts and cultural exchanges be integrated into the planning strategies of U.S. policymakers as a key element of public diplomacy. History has proven that robust public diplomacy is essential to U.S. national security and the promotion of American interests around the globe. The arts community has observed first-hand the value of international artistic exchanges in promoting moderation and tolerance among widely diverse religious and cultural groups.”

Properly utilized, increased funding for the Office of Citizen Exchange, Youth Programs Division can develop in emerging young musicians a lifelong commitment to leadership in improving international relations through cultural exchange. Investing in training young musicians to lead and to “give back” through cultural diplomacy produces a decades-long “multiplier effect” of participation in public diplomacy. Many leading international arts presenting organizations have direct experience instilling in young artists an enduring commitment to participating in, and to leading, community service and international cultural exchange. Similarly, many international arts presenting organizations have direct experience engaging the U.S. and international diplomatic corps. Through participating in high-profile youth activities, these organizations leverage the value of cultural exchange to strengthen international diplomatic relations.

I appreciate the opportunity to include this testimony in the formal Hearing Record of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations. I commend Subcommittee Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and all Subcommittee Members for their interest in using music and the arts as a medium through which to strengthen international cultural understanding. Carnegie Hall and our arts presenting partner organizations look forward to working with the Subcommittee to build a better, safer world through cultivating and enriching the next generation of youth leaders and artists.

Written Testimony for FY2017 for the Record

by Yusif Babanly

Co-founder and Board Director, U.S. Azeris Network (USAN), Washington, D.C.

**For the United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs**

Madam Chairwoman, honorable Ranking Member, honorable members of the Subcommittee,

To summarize U.S. Azeris Network (USAN)'s request in FY2017 aid to Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as Armenia-occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan:

Aid	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Armenia-occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan
USAID	\$0 (zero)	\$10.9 mln (Per administration request) or more	\$0 (zero)
Military	\$0 (zero)	\$1.7 mln FMF, \$1 mln or more for IMET (DoD)	Never requested, never allocated, NOT applicable

U.S. Azeris Network (USAN) promotes fair and needs-driven foreign assistance, based on three important criteria:

- 1) Allied relationship of the recipient state with the U.S. and U.S. national interests;
- 2) The recipient nation must have a demonstrated and certified necessity and need to be able to absorb the aid;
- 3) Legality of the aid and compliance with the U.S. and international laws.

We are of opinion that there has been a great imbalance in the U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan vs. Armenia. Azerbaijan, a victim of Armenian armed aggression and occupation, has always gotten much less than the smaller, but very aggressive Armenia. According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), since 1992 Azerbaijan has gotten a total of \$1 billion in U.S. aid, while Armenia got over \$2.2 billion. This is despite the fact that Azerbaijan is more than twice the size and population, and has several times the size of refugees/IDPs who were expelled from their homes as a result of ethnic cleansing carried out by Armenia.

Why zero-out foreign aid and military financing support to Armenia?

Armenia and International Law

Armenia has remained in military control of 16% of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territories since the ceasefire agreement was signed in May 1994. Backed by Russia, Armenian army occupied Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and 7 adjacent districts in 1992-1994. The UN Security Council passed four resolutions [822](#), [853](#), [874](#), [884](#) in 1993, all of them condemning Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan, demanding the withdrawal of all occupying forces, return of refugees and reestablishment of peace. The position of the international community was reiterated in the [Resolution 1416 of the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe](#) adopted on January 25, 2005, [United Nations General Assembly Resolution 62/243](#) adopted on March 14, 2008, both reaffirming "*continued respect and support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity*" of Azerbaijan "*within its internationally recognized borders*", demanding the "*immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Armenian forces from all the occupied territories*" of Azerbaijan and emphasizing that "*no state shall render aid or assistance*" to maintain the occupation of Azerbaijani territories.

Armenia and annexation of Crimea to Russia

Since its independence and especially in the last two decades, Armenia has transformed itself into an open proxy state of Russia. In March 2014, Azerbaijan along with other 100 states voted in favor of the [UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262](#) - backed by the United States - reaffirming support for Ukrainian territorial integrity, while Armenia joined a number of rogue states such as North Korea, Sudan, Syria, Zimbabwe, etc. to back Russia in its territorial annexation policies. Naturally, U.S. Ambassador to UN, [Samantha Power](#) expressed discontent about Armenia's rejection of international law and Yerevan's siding with Moscow.

Armenian military and Yerevan's foreign policy

As member of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), run by Kremlin, Armenia gets a free ride on allocations and/or subsidized deals from Moscow which transfers sophisticated weapons to Armenia and are directed against U.S. allies Azerbaijan, Georgia and NATO-member Turkey. With subsidized arms sales and free weaponry transfers to Armenia, Moscow has held a tight grip on Caucasus and tried to compromise pro-western Azerbaijan which has been a vital energy and security ally of the United States since its independence. To divert Azerbaijan from its course, Armenia with backing of Kremlin, had repeatedly [threatened](#) to launch "*preemptive strikes*" and "*cause irreversible damage*" to Azerbaijan, including striking oil and gas infrastructure in the country operated by Western companies. To that end, Armenia is to receive a \$200-million [arms equipment loan](#) from Moscow to buy hypersonic Iskander-M (SS-26 Stone) ballistic missiles which have a range of up to 310 mi (500 km) and can reach the energy infrastructure of Azerbaijan and facilities in NATO-member Turkey. This was followed last December by an announcement of [deployment of 7 military helicopters](#) in Armenia targeted for use against Azerbaijan. The Armenia-installed head of illegal regime in Azerbaijan's occupied territories Bako Sahakian, in turn, has stated in his [interview to Argentinian newspaper 'Clarín'](#):

"Russia is actually helping our forces, and our officers will be trained permanently with their Russian colleagues."

No doubt that US-Russian relations have deteriorated since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its actions in Syria and only a handful of client states support Kremlin's anti-Western policies, Armenia being one of those states. By its own choice, Armenia has become a military outpost of Russia as the only country in South Caucasus which hosts the Russian military base with a lease up to 2044 and a unified air defense. So obvious is Armenia's anti-Western position that its President Serzh Sargsyan openly declared in 2015 that Armenia will *"coordinate its foreign policy with Russia"* thus rendering its ties with the U.S. unimportant. This message was echoed by Nikolai Bordyuzha, head of Kremlin-run anti-NATO Collective Security Treaty Organization, who stated in March 2016 that Russia will intervene in Nagorno Karabakh conflict on the side of its member Armenia. For more facts please visit karabakh.usazeris.org.

Provisions of US laws that prohibit financial allocations to Armenia

Just like any other country, the United States recognizes Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and denounces violation of international borders. According to the provisions of Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, and Section 7069 of the FY2016 House Report 114-154, which prohibits funds from being made available for *"a government of an independent state of the former Soviet Union that directs any action in violation of the territorial integrity or national sovereignty of any other independent state of the former Soviet Union, subject to a waiver for national security"*, the U.S. government must stop allocating any funds to the government of Armenia. Moreover, the Section 7070 of the act prohibits allocation of funds which will be used *"for assistance for the central government of: (1) the Russian Federation, or (2) a country that has taken affirmative steps intended to support the Russian Federation annexation of Crimea."*

As stated above, Armenia has violated and keeps violating territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Azerbaijan, and has taken affirmative steps in supporting Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea. Therefore, based on Sections 7069 and 7070 of the aforementioned legal documents, no financial assistance to Armenia should be made available in FY2017.

Occupied territories as routes for illegal arms and narcotics trafficking

Furthermore, the US's direct assistance to the occupied Nagorno Karabakh region helps Armenia consolidate its occupation of 16% of Azerbaijani territories which serve as a black hole for drug trade, arms smuggling, proliferation of radioactive and nuclear materials and other illicit activities. 82 miles of Azerbaijani-Iranian border, which fall into the occupied territories, are used by Armenia for various illegal transfers. It's not a secret that Armenia enjoys very strong ties with Iran. As the disclosed diplomatic cables revealed in 2008, the Armenian government has been complicit in the illegal arms re-sale to the Iranian military which then transferred the weapons to the terrorist group Hezbollah Brigades operating in Iraq that used the weapons in its insurgency against U.S. troops. Documents revealed that the then Minister of Defense of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan who is now the incumbent President of Armenia signed an end-user agreement for the purchase of 1,000 Bulgaria-made anti-tank RPG-22s and 260 heavy machine

guns in January 2003 and then transferred them to Iran. The Armenian government was then confronted by the evidence it first denied but was eventually forced to admit.

Azerbaijani IDPs and assistance to the victims of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict

The other issue that Azerbaijani Americans have been very vocal about over years is the US humanitarian assistance to the victims of the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict. Regrettably, the US assistance has been solely directed to Armenia-occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region under this heading. In previous years, this issue has spurred much controversy and resentment among Azerbaijani community of the occupied territories and Azerbaijanis all over the world since it unfairly favored one side over the other. But for the last two years, the Congress established a compromise solution by omitting a specific language on the US humanitarian assistance to the victims of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

It is noteworthy that the U.S. does not give any direct aid to similar post-Soviet ungoverned conflict zones such as Donbas and Crimea (Ukraine), Abkhazia (Georgia), South Ossetia (Georgia) and Transdnistria (Moldova), not to mention many other similar regions around the world. Then why provide any direct aid to the Armenia-installed regime in occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan? It is our firm belief that the US must stop providing assistance to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan to be consistent and credible in its policy of upholding the principle of territorial integrity. The current developments in Ukraine and lack of Armenia's accountability vis-a-vis American taxpayers' money directed to Armenian government as financial assistance over the course of more than two decades also speaks to the importance of a principled position on the principle of territorial integrity of countries and national interests of the United States.

These factors necessitate ending the US assistance to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, too.

Strategic US-Azerbaijani partnership

Energy Ties

Since the early 1990s, the United States and Azerbaijan have engaged in collaborative regional projects in the energy sector. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline built to transport Azerbaijani oil to the Western markets was decisively backed by the United States. Cooperation between the United States and Azerbaijan deepened in the sphere of energy and infrastructure development as the two nations collaborated to see through realization of Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE), Baku-Tbilisi-Akhalkalaki-Kars railway project and the important Southern Gas Corridor which will connect three natural gas pipelines (BTE, TANAP and TAP) to deliver Azerbaijani gas to the European markets by 2019. Realization of *Southern Gas Corridor* will give breathing room to America's European allies and lessen their dependence on Russia's gas monopoly of imports. On April 2, 2014, during the EU-U.S. Energy Council meeting, Secretary of State John Kerry underlined the importance of Southern Gas Corridor urging the timely construction of the pipelines to ensure energy security of Europe. In his statement at the beginning of June, President

Barack Obama reiterated the position of the administration on supporting the Southern Gas Corridor to bolster EU's energy security.

Security Ties

Mutually beneficial economic relationship aside, Azerbaijan is also a steadfast partner of the United States which had committed itself to a number of U.S.-led initiatives and engagements. Azerbaijan was the first country in the former Soviet Union which immediately offered its air space and airports to its American ally after the terrorist attacks on 9/11. Under leadership of the then President Heydar Aliyev who convened a security meeting the day after the attacks, Azerbaijan committed itself to the War on Terror. Azerbaijani soldiers served shoulder-to-shoulder with their American counterparts in Afghanistan and Iraq, and in Kosovo's peacekeeping mission until 2008. What's more, Azerbaijan is one of a few countries which also committed to post-2014 Afghanistan. Azerbaijani leadership committed 3 million Euros to development and training of Afghani nationals, allowing Afghani security forces and diplomats to train at Azerbaijan's police academy, military schools and Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy. Soon these individuals will be conducting foreign policy of Afghanistan and protecting the borders and tranquility of their country.

Being an active participant NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, Azerbaijan remains a vital southern route of the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) with full access to its railroads and ports, for the use by the United States military. Up to 1/3 of the non-combat material destined to coalition forces in Afghanistan pass through Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan has taken up on various initiatives to bring peace, stability and development to its immediate neighborhood and the region as a whole. While a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council since January 2012 through December 2013, Azerbaijan has demonstrated its commitment to peace and world order by engaging its international partners on hot issues, from conflict resolutions in combat areas to maintaining peace all around the world. As true and reliable ally of the United States, Azerbaijan has also supported Washington in its international diplomatic engagements.

Therefore, based on the facts, fundamental principles of international law and US legislative provisions presented above as well as geopolitical considerations, we believe that any US government aid to Armenia and the Armenia-occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan in FY2017 should be stopped.

Conclusion

To sum up, we are asking to zero-out aid to Armenia based on geopolitical considerations and non-compliance with US laws. For Azerbaijan, we are recommending \$10.9 million (as per administration request) or more in Economic Support Funds, \$1.2 million or more in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement, \$1 million or more in International Military Education and Training, \$1.7 million for Foreign Military Financing.

*Submitted by Lisa Van Doren
Vice President & Chief of Staff, Government Affairs
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives*

**Statement on Behalf of the
American Farm Bureau Federation
AmericanHort
Florida Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association
National Council of Agricultural Employers
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
United Fresh Produce Association
USA Farmers
U.S. Apple Association
Western Growers**

**Submitted to the
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Program
United States Senate**

**Regarding the
Department of State, H-2A Program**

March 22, 2016

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your continued leadership and support for U.S. agriculture. The above signed steering committee members of the Agriculture Workforce Coalition appreciate this opportunity to submit our views regarding the FY 2017 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill, and respectfully requests this statement be made part of the official hearing record.

The labor situation in agriculture has been a concern for many years, but is moving towards a breaking point. Today, large segments of American agriculture face a critical lack of workers, a shortage that makes our farms and ranches less competitive with food from abroad and that threatens the abundant, safe and affordable domestic food supply American consumers enjoy today.

Repeated evidence over the past decades has shown that there are some jobs in agriculture that Americans simply do not want to do. Although many of these jobs offer wages competitive with similar, non-agricultural occupations, they are physically demanding, conducted outdoors in all seasons and weather, and are often seasonal or transitory. It is for this reason that farmers have grown to rely on foreign workers to perform this work.

The overarching challenge to workforce stability in agriculture is the widely acknowledged lack of authorized work status by a large number of agricultural workers despite the prevalence of documentation presented by workers to the contrary. The only option for farmers and ranchers to

legally find the workers they need is the H-2A temporary work visa program, a program that has not worked for many agricultural employers.

The H-2A program's basic framework is overly restrictive and difficult to maneuver. In recent years the program has become even more bureaucratic, burdensome and costly to use. But, each year, more and more farms have to turn to the H-2A program for legal foreign labor to meet their workforce needs.

The demand on the program is increasing as producers have nowhere else to turn; yet the administrative weight of the program cannot keep up. H-2A employment has doubled in the past four years and will double again in the next 2 years or less. Even at current levels, capacity and infrastructure issues at the Departments of State, Homeland Security and Labor are leading to greater processing delays than ever before. This means bureaucratic red tape and delays in the program result in workers showing up at the farm well after the date they were needed to be there, and millions of dollars in agricultural production is lost in the interim.

To increase efficiency at the border we seek expansion of the Pilot Program created between the Consulate General of the United States, Monterrey Mexico and the Washington Farm Labor Association, which allows a waiver from the interview process on reentry for returning workers who have abided by their visa terms, passed a mandatory background check, and where the employer has verified the past employment. Expanding this program will free-up significant government resources that could be better utilized processing the ever-increasing number of new H-2A workers, rather than interviewing again the scores of workers who consistently abide by the H-2A program requirements year after year and have repeatedly demonstrated their non-immigrant intent.

Specifically, we seek the following language for inclusion in the FY2017 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations bill:

The Secretary shall implement a pilot program at all consulates to allow interview waivers for returning H-2A workers if the returning worker passes the mandatory background check and employer provides past employment verification.

We remain steadfast in our pursuit of broader immigration reform that meets both the short- and long-term workforce requirements of all of agriculture—both those producers with seasonal labor needs, and those with year-round needs. Yet we recognize such reforms may not come to fruition in the near term.

Left with no other alternative, we seek your support for the inclusion of these modest adjustments as you prepare FY2017 appropriations legislation.

Thank you again, and members of the Subcommittee, for the opportunity to share our views.

**Testimony before the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs for Fiscal Year 2017**

**Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC**

**By Gerry D. Scott, III
Director
American Research Center in Egypt**

Chairperson Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and other members of the Subcommittee, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to submit testimony in 2014 and 2015 and appreciate the opportunity to do so again now on proposed Fiscal Year 2017 funding for State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. On behalf of the President and Board of the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), we are submitting this testimony to express our strong support for continued United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding for the preservation, conservation, and protection of unique world heritage sites in Egypt, and to update the Committee on this program's measurable success and accomplishments.

As you know only too well, the political changes in Egypt have had broad repercussions throughout Egyptian society and affecting US-Egyptian relations. But a lesser-known consequence of the current situation in Egypt is that Egypt's extraordinary cultural heritage and its many unique and irreplaceable monuments and artifacts are at risk. The rich heritage represented by Egypt's historical remains, a vital part of world heritage, has been directly threatened and global efforts spanning over 200 years to preserve and conserve this incredible cultural history could be destroyed or irreparably damaged. Past threats -- barely avoided -- to the unique holdings of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, have become a reality at several other sites, tragically illustrated by the looting and severe damage to the Malawi National Museum in the Middle Egyptian city of Minya in August 2013 and the collateral bombing in January 2014 of the Islamic Art Museum and Manuscript Library in Cairo, the last two having been addressed directly through the USAID/ARCE partnership.

ARCE was instrumental in developing a registrar's department and digital inventory at the Egyptian Museum with support from USAID and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and has been engaged in assisting the Islamic Art Museum and Manuscript Library with the support of USAID and the Swiss Embassy. The registrars at the Egyptian Museum, shortly after completing their training with ARCE, were instrumental in the identification and recovery of stolen artifacts

shortly after the January 2011 revolution. This experience served to underline the critical importance of the skills, processes, and tools that were successfully developed there.

Recent news from Iraq and Syria about the destruction of irreplaceable heritage further reminds us of the urgency of both preserving world heritage and strengthening the capacity of those responsible for its protection. ARCE in collaboration with USAID has done exactly this and ARCE would welcome the opportunity to address similar dire needs at other key museums and sites in Egypt.

Founded in 1948, the American Research Center in Egypt is the oldest organization in the United States dedicated to working with the broad based US academic community and university system, as well as other research organizations, to preserve, conserve, explore, and catalogue Egypt's cultural heritage and to improve Egypt's ability to preserve and protect its own irreplaceable sites. Given this focus, ARCE plays a critical role in fostering strong cultural ties between the U.S. and Egypt. Made up of over 30 institutions dedicated to the study of Egyptology and the preservation of Egyptian antiquities, ARCE is the leader of a coordinated effort to focus on all aspects of Egypt's rich cultural heritage spanning the ancient Pharaonic period, as well as historically significant Christian and Islamic sites of more recent eras.

ARCE's support for scholarship on all of Egypt's culture helps us maintain a balance between research and conservation interests in Egypt's distant past and Egypt's Christian and Islamic present. Exemplified by our fellowship program, made possible by the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), study of modern Egypt is of critical importance to American scholars and underscores our commitment to strengthening cultural ties and broadening an understanding of Egypt's richly layered heritage. In times that directly call for increased American knowledge of the Middle East, continuing support provided by the State Department's ECA to ARCE and other American overseas research centers is of vital importance.

ARCE members include prestigious universities and museums such as Johns Hopkins University, Brown University, the University of California system, the University of Chicago, New York University, the University of Pennsylvania, Yale University, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Getty Conservation Institute among others, all of which have made critical efforts at the multiple sites in Egypt where they work. ARCE itself undertakes conservation projects and training activities in Egypt, as well as maintaining an essential coordinating office in Cairo, working tirelessly on behalf of our members in securing permission to work within Egypt, and performing a unique role in training and developing Egypt's own human resources, specifically in the areas of archaeology, preservation, conservation and cataloging skills, which are highly valued by the men and women who work for Egypt's Ministry of Antiquities, and are treasured as a concrete form of American assistance.

ARCE conservation, training, and employment programs in Egypt closely align with USAID's priority of promoting the effective management of Egypt's cultural heritage resources. The aim is to enhance cultural tourism, a key economic driver, and direct related economic benefits to the surrounding communities.

During the most recently completed USAID grant, over 1000 Egyptians directly benefited from ARCE sponsored training programs that were designed to build their capacity to protect and preserve their own cultural past. As a follow on to the completed grant, a new three and a half year grant was awarded by USAID and signed in February 2015. This grant allows ARCE to build on previous job creation and training initiatives, incorporating past programming successes with new training ideas. The inclusion of future leaders of the Egyptian government's heritage organizations during this grant means that they will have the potential to influence future decision-making policies regarding the stewardship of Egypt's cultural heritage, one of Egypt's most important economic resources. ARCE's work aims to generate greater economic and educational benefits for those living in and around the proposed project sites. ARCE's current program of encouraging the local population to invest in their cultural heritage helps to ensure their future participation in safeguarding that heritage against accelerated deterioration and loss. In order to preserve the investment that USAID and ARCE have already made over the last two decades of partnership, ARCE recognizes the importance of continuing to develop a cadre of Egyptian conservation and archaeology professionals, expanding employment opportunities for skilled workers through on-the-job training and mentoring; providing medium to long-term employment opportunities for unskilled workers; and further advancing conservation training at several sites throughout Egypt.

ARCE's current programs in Luxor, Sohag, and Cairo give priority to building the capacity of Egyptian archaeologists, conservators, and all local stakeholders through training initiatives and cultural heritage educational courses.

Our training initiatives in particular include an emphasis on the participation of women. As with ARCE's past USAID programs, during our current grant period we will encourage significant participation by women in conservation and archaeology field schools. We seek to improve on the approximately 36% ratio of women trained in our most recently concluded grant. Over 250 women have participated in ARCE training programs to date. It is also noteworthy that ARCE itself employs Egyptian women both in leading roles in conservation training and community awareness programs.

While receiving operational support from our members and individual donors, in recent decades ARCE activities and those of our many member organizations have been either directly or indirectly supported by invaluable, targeted USAID funding. This visionary support by the US government has enabled ARCE and our member universities and organizations to take extraordinary steps in recent years to preserve and conserve unique world heritage sites in Egypt.

US government support and involvement in ensuring the protection of these sites and unique collections is now more important than ever; without it, the losses to Egypt's shared global history could be devastating.

While we are well aware that overall US government funding is highly constrained in the current budget environment, it is nonetheless critical that funds currently available for Egypt be considered for funding activities like those undertaken by ARCE and our US members in support of the critical preservation of Egypt's shared world heritage.

It is also important to note that the Committee on Appropriations has played an essential role over the past twenty years in helping to ensure the preservation of Egypt's irreplaceable global heritage. Because of our experience in conducting cultural research and fieldwork in Egypt and our ability to foster American-Egyptian relations in the areas of culture and education, ARCE was selected to undertake an important initiative by the Committee to provide funding for the preservation and restoration of Egypt's cultural heritage. In a visionary step, it was the subcommittee on Foreign Operations that initiated funding for the preservation of Egypt's global legacy through a grant from USAID. Under this grant, a broad program of work was initiated that included conservation of historically and culturally significant architecture, works of art, religious inscriptions, and archaeological artifacts representing thousands of years of Egypt's historical and cultural achievement, as well as a broad range of training programs for Egyptians related to conserving and preserving this invaluable legacy.

The results of this program have been far ranging and monuments that were on the verge of being lost have been saved and are now open to the public. In addition, hundreds of Egyptians have received technical training in various fields of heritage management, culturally significant objects have been preserved, and these results have been shared with the scholarly, professional, and general public through a series of publications. The work stands as a testament to the significant contribution that the United States of America has made to preserve Egypt's cultural heritage as embodied in its magnificent monuments for future generations, as well as helping to insure that tourism can remain an important part of Egypt's economy.

Because of the significance of these USAID grants for the preservation of Egypt's cultural heritage, to the overall cultivation of the relationship between Egypt and the U.S., and to the vitality of the American Research Center in Egypt, we convey our appreciation for the continuing support of the Committee and the Congress and extend our invitation to show you the impact of this work, made possible by your vision, when next any of your members are traveling to Egypt.



It starts with vision.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR THE RECORD

House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Submitted by: Bob Ranck, President and Chief Executive Officer

Orbis International

March 22, 2016

I thank the Chairwoman, the Ranking Member, the Members of the Subcommittee and their staff for this opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Orbis International and our beneficiaries across the globe that benefit every day from the partnership and support that Orbis has received from the United States government, via the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Specifically, we would be grateful if the Subcommittee could include in its FY17 appropriations bill \$3 million for the Child Blindness Program and \$30 million for the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) program.

Introduction:

Orbis International is a US-based global health organization dedicated to eliminating avoidable blindness and promoting eye health in the developing world. Created in 1982 through a public/private partnership between USAID and a small group of committed US philanthropists, Orbis has worked in over 90 countries and provided valuable training, millions of screenings, and innumerable surgeries. In 2014 alone, Orbis trained 26,912 doctors, nurses, and other eye care professionals, conducted more than 2.6 million screenings and examinations, and 67,243 surgeries for children and adults.

Orbis provides the tools, training and technology necessary for local partners in the developing world to understand their needs and develop workable and lasting solutions to unnecessary blindness. By building their long-term capacity, primarily through training of ophthalmologists and other eye health and eye care professionals, Orbis enables its partner institutions to take action by reaching a state where they can provide, on their own, quality eye care services that are affordable, accessible and sustainable.



It starts with vision.

Continued partnership and opportunity for funding from USAID is very important to Orbis as it continues to strengthen, expand and fulfill its mission under the affirmation, “It starts with vision.” The critical interests to Orbis are the continued efforts by Congress to fulfill the commitment made by our country and USAID to invest in (1) the Child Blindness Program at the level of \$3 million and (2) the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program at \$30 million.

USAID Funding – Child Blindness Program

USAID’s former-A2Z Micronutrient and Childhood Blindness Project was of great importance to Orbis. It helped fund critical research and leverage existing funds for projects in countries like Ethiopia. Current funding from USAID’s Child Blindness Program is supporting Orbis’s work in Mongolia to create a scalable model for basic vision screening for refractive error, which accounts for 88 percent of vision impairment among Mongolian children; and in Ethiopia to provide expanded pediatric eye health services in the critically underserved north-west region. Orbis, as one of the first international eye care organizations to introduce an integrated model for the prevention and treatment of childhood blindness in developing countries, consistently seeks to improve and expand its approach in building the capacity of local partner institutions to make quality pediatric eye care services available and accessible in their communities. Orbis utilizes multi-disciplinary teams to design strategies that address the complex barriers to eye health within all levels of the health system, understanding the local operations and financial context, and employing a long-term perspective. Establishing and strengthening child-friendly eye centers, providing specialist training on the treatment of children’s delicate eyes, and ensuring that the appropriate equipment is available are all essential to eliminating child blindness and have been critical to Orbis’s interventions. Continued funding from USAID has contributed to Orbis’s efforts to eliminate the debilitating and needless health crisis of preventable or treatable childhood blindness, and Orbis hopes that additional program funding will be forthcoming to move Orbis forward in countries such as India and Bangladesh.

Orbis is thankful to the Subcommittee for the \$2.5M allocated to the Child Blindness Program in FY16 appropriations. Despite this program’s absence from the President’s budget since FY13, these funds remain incredibly vital, as they are the *only* dedicated funds in USAID for the prevention and treatment of childhood blindness and the restoration of sight. While grants from this program are typically small, they enable existing dollars to have greater impact, improve leverage and depth of reach, and fund research and evaluation critical to measuring success. Since the program’s inception through a 1991 Congressional directive, more than 54 eye care and health non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have received grants totaling approximately \$28 million to implement eye care interventions in 57 countries. Furthermore, USAID received an unprecedented number of applications in the last round of CBP funding, clearly illustrating the overwhelming need around the world for continued funding of this program.



It starts with vision.

Orbis hopes Congress will continue its steadfast commitment to this program and demonstrate its serious concern for the impact and pervasiveness of blindness among children in the developing world. Investments in strategies aimed at ending avoidable blindness and visual impairment offer many of the greatest economic and social returns in global health, while dramatically improving the quality of life of individuals and families. More than 90% of the world's blind live in the developing world where access to eye care is extremely limited or unavailable. This includes a disproportionate number of women, as nearly two-thirds of the world's blind are women, due to the high cost of surgery, inability to travel to a surgical facility, and lack of access to information and resources (International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness). Millions of people suffer needlessly, but USAID's Child Blindness funding allows us to provide some relief and demonstrate the caring and good will of the American people.

USAID Funding – American Schools and Hospitals Abroad

Funding from USAID's American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) program has been of particular importance to Orbis. ASHA's initial funding helped enable the creation of the world's first Flying Eye Hospital (FEH), a DC-8 converted into a one-of-a-kind airborne ophthalmic teaching facility that has crossed the globe. The Orbis FEH is a hospital with wings that brings together dedicated eye care professionals and aviators to give the gift of sight through training programs held in developing countries around the world. Onboard the FEH, local doctors, nurses and technicians work alongside Orbis International's medical team of volunteer faculty to exchange knowledge and improve technical skills. In the classroom on the plane, doctors gather for lectures, discussions and live broadcasts of surgical procedures being performed on-board the FEH operating room. Surgeries can also be broadcast to a classroom outside the aircraft, for instance, to a nearby partner hospital. In this way, large numbers of trainees can observe surgeries and pose questions to the operating surgeons via a two-way audio-visual system.

In 1992, with the retirement of the DC-8, Orbis again benefitted from USAID funding through ASHA to build the second generation Flying Eye Hospital, which is housed in a converted DC-10 aircraft. Orbis is now in the final stages of retrofitting its third generation FEH, supported yet again by a USAID \$1.2M ASHA grant. This donated MD-10-30 aircraft will allow Orbis to have greater geographical range, enhanced technology capabilities and reduced operating costs. Since 1982, Orbis's FEH has visited 78 countries and conducted 290 training and service delivery programs in 161 cities where its programs have positively affected the lives of millions.

Increasing the ASHA budget to \$30 million would allow for an increased number of grants to be awarded at a higher level for those capital improvements that benefit numerous countries, providing access to costly educational and medical services. Recipients have shown strong evidence of successful and ongoing public and private partnership, underpinned by these singular investments in critical infrastructure. In a time when dollars are strained and our nation needs to be strategic in its resource allocations, it makes sense to support and strengthen effective programs where partnerships are strong and dollars are leveraged to increase in-country capacity, as well as provide improved education and health care to those in most urgent need in developing countries.



It starts with vision.

Conclusion

Blindness has profound human and socioeconomic consequences. There are 39 million blind people in the world today, among 285 million people who are visually impaired. Astonishingly, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), 80 percent of all visual impairment can be avoided or cured. The costs of lost productivity, rehabilitation and education of the blind constitute a significant economic burden for the individual, their family and society at large. Investments in addressing avoidable blindness and visual impairment offer many of the greatest long-term economic and social returns in global health, while dramatically improving the day-to-day quality of life for individuals and families. Through the generosity of our donors, our programs and partnerships provide the expertise, infrastructure and on-going support needed to build sustainable eye health systems serving those most in need at the local level. As a founding member of Vision 2020: The Right to Sight, a campaign led by the World Health Organization and other leading blindness prevention organizations to eliminate avoidable blindness by the year 2020, Orbis is wholly dedicated to working in partnership to create a world free of needless blindness.

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**Global Health Technologies Coalition Outside Witness Testimony for the Record
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
US Senate – March 22, 2016**

**Erin Will Morton, Coalition Director, Global Health Technologies Coalition
USAID Global Health Programs FY 2017 Appropriations**

Chairman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the fiscal year 2017 appropriations funding for the US Agency for International Development (USAID). We appreciate your leadership in global health, and we hope that your support will continue. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC), a group of more than 25 nonprofit organizations working together to advance US policies that can accelerate the development of new global health innovations—including new vaccines, drugs, diagnostics, microbicides, multipurpose prevention technologies (MPTs), and other tools—to combat global health diseases and conditions.

GHTC members strongly believe that in order to meet the world's most pressing global health needs, it is critical to invest in research today so that the most effective health solutions are available now and in the future. Sustainable investment in R&D for a broad range of neglected diseases and health conditions is critical to tackling both endemic and emerging global health challenges that impact people around the world and at home in the United States. The US government plays an important, leading role in biomedical innovation and fostering global health R&D, and we urge the Committee to build upon this legacy. My testimony reflects the needs expressed by our member organizations, which include nonprofit advocacy organizations, policy think-tanks, implementing organizations, and product development partnerships (PDPs).

We strongly urge the Committee to continue its established support for global health research and development (R&D) by:

1. Sustaining and supporting US investment in global health research and product development by funding the Global Health accounts at USAID and the State Department at minimums of \$3.73 billion and \$6.195 billion respectively, and fully funding each disease or population-specific program under this account;
2. Instructing USAID—in collaboration with other agencies involved in global health—to prioritize R&D within each of the disease and condition areas under USAID's Global Health Programs account; and
3. Requiring leaders at the State Department and USAID to work together with other US agencies to develop a whole-of-government global health R&D strategy to ensure that US investments in global health research are efficient, coordinated, and streamlined.

Critical need for new global health tools

While we have made tremendous gains in global health over the past fifteen years, millions of people around the world are still threatened by AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), malaria, and other neglected diseases and health conditions. In 2104, tuberculosis killed 1.5 million people, surpassing deaths from HIV/AIDS. Sub-Saharan Africa saw 1.4 million new HIV infections. Half the global population remains at risk for malaria and drug resistant strains are growing. Maternal mortality is 14 times greater in under-resourced regions than developed countries. One

out of every 12 children in Sub-Saharan Africa dies before the age of five, often from vaccine-preventable and other communicable diseases. These figures highlight the tremendous global health challenges that still remain and the need for sustained investment in global health research to deliver new tools to combat endemic and emerging threats.

New tools and technologies are critical, both to address unmet global health needs and address challenges of drug resistance, out-dated and toxic treatments, and difficulty administering current health technologies in poor, remote, and unstable settings. As seen with recent outbreaks of Ebola and Zika, we simply do not have the tools needed to prevent, diagnose, and treat many neglected diseases. While it is important to work to increase access to proven, existing drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and other health tools, it is just as critical to invest in the development of next generation tools to fight existing and emerging disease threats. Particularly in our era of globalization where diseases know no borders, investments today in global health innovations for malaria, extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB), and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), Ebola, and Zika will mean millions of future lives saved—at home and around the world.

Leveraging the US capacity for innovation

USAID adds tremendous value to US investments in global health R&D, funding late-stage research and advancing product development appropriate for the low-resource settings where they will be used. In addition, USAID's global presence and a unique understanding of the needs of patients in different settings and contexts is key to developing health innovations that are transformative on the ground. We applaud the efforts that USAID has made in fostering innovation in health technologies, including:

- Partnering across government agencies and among private-sector partners to identify breakthrough innovations to combat the 2014 Ebola epidemic and better prepare us for future outbreaks. The Fighting Ebola Grand Challenge is supporting the development of 14 innovations identified for their potential to reinforce the response to current and future Ebola outbreaks, including novel personal protective equipment.
- Advancing global health R&D partnerships with other governments and philanthropic donors. USAID coordinates with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada, the government of Norway, and other donors through the Saving Lives at Birth grand challenge, focused on developing lifesaving innovations for mothers and newborns. Innovations advanced through this contest include a rapid-results, portable HIV test and easy-to-use, pre-measured, at-home treatments for HIV/AIDS.
- Supporting research to develop safe, effective, accessible, and acceptable tools for use in the developing world to prevent HIV—including microbicides based on antiretroviral drugs, which have shown the potential to prevent HIV infection in women—and HIV vaccines.
- Playing a key role in the global effort to fight TB by supporting research to develop new therapeutics and providing expertise on implementation and scale-up of the products that are ultimately licensed.
- Supporting the distribution of more than 250 million courses of the child-friendly malaria drug Coartem® Dispersible, which is estimated to have saved 340,000 young lives from malaria between 2009 and 2013.

In addition to fostering global health research, USAID has shown great leadership in its collaboration with the private sector to advance new health technologies. One example is the agency's support for product development partnerships (PDPs)—public-private partnerships designed to develop lifesaving products for use in countries where disease burdens are highest and no viable commercial markets exist. PDPs use a portfolio approach to R&D and pursue multiple strategies for the same disease area—a strategy that has proven very successful. To date, PDPs have developed and licensed 19 products to combat neglected diseases in low- and middle-income countries. In addition, USAID also works in close partnership with academia, large pharmaceutical companies, the biotechnology industry, and regulatory and other government agencies in developing countries.

Addressing critical gaps

USAID is an important partner in global health product development. It is critical for the agency to continue to bolster this key function. The agency's release of a five-year strategy for health-related research was a welcome sign of the agency's prioritization of science, technology, and innovation. However, there are areas of USAID's global health portfolio where there is additional need for R&D. For example, USAID does not currently incorporate research for new tools for tuberculosis into its programming, despite TB becoming the world's largest infectious disease killer in 2014. USAID also could advance its role in R&D for NTDs, which began with a small grant for NTD research in 2014. While the agency does important work to provide treatments for five of the most highly prevalent NTDs in the developing world, treatment options for the NTDs with the highest death rates, including human African trypanosomiasis; visceral leishmaniasis; and Chagas disease, are extremely limited. To continue to make progress against all fourteen NTDs, USAID should implement a comprehensive NTD R&D strategy to ensure that new tools are available to treat all NTDs, especially those with the highest death rates and for which current treatments are archaic, have significant side effects, and are often difficult and expensive to administer in resource-poor settings.

Innovation as a strategic national security and economic decision

Global health R&D brings lifesaving tools to those who need them most, however, investments in R&D yield benefits in addition humanitarian and development goals. In an era of increased interconnectedness, the health of Americans is directly related to the health of populations abroad. As recent outbreaks of Zika and Ebola demonstrate, diseases know no borders. Health crises abroad can become health crises at home, and it is imperative that we sustainably invest in R&D for a broad range of neglected infectious diseases so that we understand emerging disease threats and have tools ready-to-go when we need them. Global health is American health, and investments in global health R&D are investments in global health security.

Global health R&D is also a smart economic investment in the United States, where it drives job creation, spurs business activity, and engages academic institutions. Sixty-four cents of every US dollar invested in global health R&D benefits US-based researchers, many of whom conduct their research at US universities. As just one example of the many states positively impacted by global health R&D, the global health industry in Washington State includes 168 global health organizations, 54 percent of whom work on global health technology and devices.

This industry directly accounts for \$5.8 billion in output and provided 12,620 direct global health jobs in the state.

Collaboration across the US government

In addition to USAID, support for global health R&D in the US government comes from the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Each of these agencies play a unique and essential role in moving new global health technologies from concept to reality, and strong interagency collaboration is vital the successful development and roll-out of a new product. Strategic dialogue and coordination across agencies is essential to ensuring that limited US funding for global health R&D is efficient, streamlined, and properly leveraged. We urge the Committee to encourage USAID to work with CDC, DoD, FDA, NIH, HHS, Office of Global Affairs, and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Security Council to develop a whole-of-government strategy for global health R&D.

Recommendations

Global health research that improves the lives of people around the world—while at the same time promoting global health security, creating jobs, and spurring economic growth at home—is a win-win. In keeping with this value, GHTC respectfully requests that the Committee do the following:

1. Sustain and support US investments in global health research and product development. As there is no specific line item in the federal budget that dictates funding levels for global health R&D, it is important to uphold US investment in the entire Global Health Programs account of the USAID budget, fully fund each disease-specific account, and honor US commitments to multilateral global health programs. USAID should include research for new health technologies in each of its global health programs—including R&D for new tools to fight NTDs and TB—and articulate how investments in R&D are strategic to achieving broader global health goals.
2. Fund the Global Health Programs accounts at USAID and the State Department at minimums of \$3.73 billion and \$6.195 billion respectively. We ask that this support not come at the expense of robust funding for the entire set of poverty-focused humanitarian and development accounts within the State and Foreign Operations budget.
3. Request that leaders at the State Department and USAID work with leaders at other US agencies, including NIH, CDC, FDA, DoD, HHS Office of Global Affairs, and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Security Council to develop a whole-of-government global health R&D strategy to ensure that US investments in global health research are efficient, coordinated, and streamlined.
4. USAID's current Health Research Strategy only goes through 2015, and we ask that the Committee request an additional five-year strategy and an annual report on progress made that includes information on all US government agencies involved in global health R&D, including all R&D at USAID.

On behalf of the members of GHTC, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Committee for the opportunity to testify.

TESTIMONY OF
TOM CORS
DIRECTOR OF LANDS
U.S. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
SUBMITTED TO
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS
MARCH 18, 2015

The Nature Conservancy thanks the Committee for its strong support of international conservation efforts. With over 60 years of experience in pioneering conservation in coordination and cooperation with private landowners, businesses, and federal, state, local, and tribal governments across the United States, the Conservancy implements conservation on the ground in 69 countries around the world. As the world's largest conservation organization with over one million members, we have seen firsthand the challenges and opportunities in the developing world and to people who call those places home. We strive for conservation approaches that benefit both people and nature.

U.S. government leadership in biodiversity conservation occupies a special place in international relations. Foreign assistance has been an important part of U.S. foreign policy for more than sixty years. Support for such assistance draws upon many sources, including the innate generosity of the American people in the face of acute needs in poor countries. But it also reflects a consensus that such assistance – including to conservation of natural resources – is in our own national interest.

The 2014 edition of the *Living Planet Report*, a bi-annual science based assessment of the biological health of the Earth and the impact of human activity, noted that 70 percent of global water use is for agriculture, and that 2 billion people worldwide depend on forests for shelter, jobs, water, fuel, and food. The report documented growing pressures on the world's forests, freshwater, and other natural resources, as well as troubling trends in global biodiversity. Particularly concerning is the 52 percent decline in populations of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish since 1970.

In our work, we strive to remedy environmental challenges caused by illegal or unsustainable patterns of trade and consumption, particularly around illegal trade in wildlife and timber, and illegal and unsustainable fishing practices. Addressing these threats is critical to secure the health of the world's forests, wildlife, oceans and fisheries so that they can continue to provide their benefits to future generations. In addition, natural systems not only need help to adjust to climate change—they can be part of the solution to climate change.

The Nature Conservancy remains a committed partner of the U.S. Federal Government as it continues to solidify and build upon our nation's legacy on global biodiversity conservation. American long-term economic prosperity and national security hinge upon our ability to help steward our world's natural heritage. For this reason, our work at The Nature Conservancy in the United States and abroad has been closely aligned. For example, our partnership with ranchers in

the American West informs our current program in Kenya at the Northern Rangelands Trust, where we are helping to introduce better grazing practices and more efficient marketing of cattle in ways that boost local people's income, and improves security against Somali raiders. In fact, poaching in this area has begun to decline. Elephant populations are stabilizing, and many other species are making gains.

As such, we respectfully request the Congress to continue its investments in global biodiversity conservation through our natural resource agencies of the U.S. government; and specifically through the following foreign assistance mechanisms in Fiscal Year 2017:

USAID Biodiversity Conservation Program: With its new Biodiversity Policy, USAID is building on its successful track record in over 50 countries to reduce resource loss and degradation from illegal extraction of natural resources, overfishing, poor agricultural practices and weak governance. Nearly half the funds are targeted in Tier 1 countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Experience has shown that such programs, including current work in the Congo and Amazon basins, and the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), are often the most efficient way to address problems that do not respect national borders. We ask Congress to continue this critical work at last year's level of \$265 million.

REDD – Sustainable Landscapes: Tropical forests continue to be one of the most threatened ecosystems in the world, but efforts funded in part by Congress are advancing conservation in these areas. REDD+ (“Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks”) is an evolving policy framework that incentivizes developing forest countries to curb deforestation while addressing rural poverty, good governance, land tenure issues, and securing emissions reductions. The United States has supported efforts through multilateral funds such as the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and the Forest Investment Program to scale up this framework. We ask Congress to support \$123.5 million for this work.

Global Environment Facility (GEF): The GEF is an independent international financial institution which provides grants to support natural capital and improve management of natural resources. With more than 1,000 projects in 155 countries, the GEF is the largest single financier of forest conservation. Since its inception, over \$2.3 billion in GEF investments have leveraged more than \$6 billion in co-financing from private, philanthropic and public sectors. Each dollar of the U.S. quota is leveraged by four dollars from other donor countries, and then further leveraged by local countries' match, so that the final leverage on U.S. appropriated funds is greater – by some calculations, as high as 50 to 1. We ask Congress to support \$168.2 million to honor the United States pledge to the GEF.

Green Climate Fund (GCF): The GCF is a multilateral trust fund designed to foster low-emission and resilient development. Investing in it builds on a history of strong U.S. leadership to fund critical efforts to combat climate change around the world, including the Bush Administration's pledge of \$2 billion in 2008 to the Climate Investment Funds, which should be fulfilled by the beginning of 2017. The Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCII) is the current funding mechanism for the GCF. GCCII helps countries both mitigate and adapt to climate change through important multilateral and bilateral engagement with major and emerging

economies. We urge the Congress to support the President's request for \$1.3 billion to advance the GCCI, which includes \$750 million in funding for the Green Climate Fund. Supporting the GCCI and GCF demonstrates a clear U.S. commitment to reducing carbon pollution and enhancing climate change resilience while incentivizing developing countries to further reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, The Nature Conservancy strongly supports and welcomes increasing levels of environmental protection incorporated in sequential trade agreements. Linking trade to improved environmental management gives us valuable new leverage to encourage countries to deal with natural resource issues, many of which can be exacerbated by increased international trade—particularly in countries with important timber or other natural resources to export.

A healthy natural environment is crucial to sustainable economic and social development. Too often, short-term financial considerations cause harm to both the natural world and people. U.S. investment in international conservation contributes to security – national, natural and human – all of which require a healthy and sustainable natural world. We urge you to continue investing in our common security through the nation's foreign assistance programs.



Thomas M. Susman
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March 18, 2016

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Lowey:

The American Bar Association (ABA) works through its Rule of Law Initiative and Center for Human Rights to implement U.S. government-supported programs to advance democracy, the rule of law, and human rights around the world, contributing the expertise of its more than 400,000 members and some \$3 million annually in pro bono legal assistance to these efforts. We ask for your continued support in Fiscal Year 2017 for such Democracy, Rights, and Governance (DRG) programming, so critical to global efforts to combat terrorism, extremism and insecurity and to promote equitable economic development and well-being.

The ABA participates in InterAction's DRG Initiative and shares its appreciation of favorable bill language and funding levels in the Fiscal Year 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act. We further support the DRG Initiative's request for the Committee to support robust funding and to carry over important bill language from Fiscal Year 2016 into the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations cycle. We respectfully recommend the following funding levels and language:

- \$2.86 billion for Democracy Programs under Title VII. This figure approximates the President's request. It also correlates to the spending levels for DRG programs going back to 2012 -- levels we feel provide for the most impact.
- \$170 million for the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) under Title I. This figure is equal to the Congressional funding for the Endowment in 2016.
- We recommend that the set-aside bill language for Democracy Programs remains for Fiscal Year 2017 to ensure that the amount being requested and appropriated is actually spent for this purpose. The set-aside for DRG programming also prevents diversions to other, unrelated programs.
- We hope the bill language for Program Prioritization remains for Fiscal Year 2017. The prioritization for those non-profit organizations that demonstrate an enduring

commitment to democracy and the rule of law provides the type of people-to-people relations that are appropriate and most effective for DRG programs.

- We recommend the bill language for Choice of Instrument remains for Fiscal Year 2017. The bill language supporting the benefits of grants and cooperative agreements is consistent with the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act.

In addition, the ABA specifically requests consideration of the following:

- Countering Violent Extremism

Governments facing violent extremism require support in developing legal frameworks to combat terrorism. To be truly effective, such frameworks must not only include law enforcement and security measures but also steps to combat the discrimination, corruption, torture, and other violations of human rights that can fuel and exacerbate terrorism. We support bill language included in Section 7073(b) of the Fiscal Year 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which provides for activities programming to combat violent extremism through promotion of human rights and the rule of law, and we request that the Committee include this language in the Fiscal Year 2017 bill.

- Criminal Defense Advocates

Much U.S. government assistance appropriately prioritizes prosecutorial and judicial capacity building. To hold these authorities accountable and build a sustainable rule of law, such assistance should be complemented by a robust program of support for defense bars and programs of indigent criminal defense that guarantees an equality of arms in criminal justice systems, particularly in the countries of Latin American and Europe and Eurasia transitioning to adversarial criminal procedure. We urge the committee to include report language under *Global Programs – Rule of Law and Judicial Reform* in the Fiscal Year 2017 bill that recognizes the importance of assistance to criminal defense advocates and bar associations.

- Migrants and Refugees

As the migration crisis continues, legal assistance to migrants and refugees in front-line states is a critical strategy to manage flows of people, address grievances that fuel insecurity, and find sustainable solutions. The ABA has pioneered some of this work in Turkey, working with local bar associations to meet the legal needs of Syrian refugees. Similar programs of assistance are needed in other states in the Middle East, the Balkans, and Central and Eastern Europe. We request that the Committee include report language in Fiscal Year 2017 to urge that legal assistance be included among the services and programs funded through the various accounts for migrant and refugee assistance.

- China Rule of Law

It is in the strategic security and economic interests of the U.S. Government to continue to support improvements in rule of law in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Whether with respect to the security of U.S. business investment in China, global food security, criminal justice, or environmental protection, China's legal system, respect for international law, and willingness and ability to protect the basic rights of citizens, will have significant repercussions for U.S. interests. In light of increasing restrictions on lawyers and civil society organizations in China, increased support for locally-driven rule of law reforms in areas where there continue to be openings for engagement and reform is critical. Given the recent crackdown on human rights lawyers, in particular, such support should include a long-term strategy to protect the rights of lawyers and strengthen the overall stature of lawyers as important participants in creating social justice among the public, government, and justice sector. Finally, to maximize flexibility and impact, we believe that such assistance should be provided through a diversity of U.S. government funding agencies. We request that the following bill language be included under Section 7043(c) for Fiscal Year 2017:

(3) Of the funds appropriated by this Act under the heading "Economic Support Fund", not less than \$15,000,000 shall be made available for democracy, rule of law and environment programs for the PRC: Provided, That the strategic objective of such programs shall be to promote and strengthen transparency, accountability, and civic advocacy at the grassroots and national levels in the PRC.

The ABA appreciates the Committee's past support of funding for critical democracy, rights, and governance programs. We are cognizant of the budgetary challenges facing our nation and understand that difficult decisions must be made in allocating funding. However, if the U.S. fails to invest adequate resources in this area, countries that do not share our commitment to democratic values and free markets will continue to languish and serve as destabilizing forces, to the detriment of U.S. national interests.

If we can answer any questions or provide any additional information, please don't hesitate to contact Kristi Gaines in the ABA Governmental Affairs Office at 202-662-1763 or at kristi.gaines@americanbar.org. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Susman
Director
Governmental Affairs Office

Name: Richard Leach, President and CEO, World Food Program USA

Subcommittee: House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Subject: A. U.S. Agency for International Development
Bilateral Assistance
1. International Disaster Assistance
2. Global Health, Nutrition
3. Development Assistance, Feed the Future
B. General Provisions – Community Development Fund

Request

World Food Program USA (WFP USA) is a non-profit organization that works to solve global hunger by raising U.S. support for the mission of the UN World Food Programme (WFP). Specifically, we request the following funding levels for three essential programs and one piece of bill language within the jurisdiction of the subcommittee:

- International Disaster Assistance -- \$2.8 billion (of which at least one third - \$900 million - should be used for emergency food assistance)
- Nutrition -- \$230 million
- Feed the Future -- \$1.2 billion
- We also request bill language be included in the General Provisions regarding the Community Development Fund and non-emergency, development activities in the Title II Food for Peace account.

To maintain strong U.S. leadership in solving hunger and to respond to critical emergency needs worldwide, WFP USA urges the subcommittee to provide the strongest possible funding for global food security programs. Our specific funding requests mirror those in the InterAction *Choose to Invest FY 2017* recommendations, which have been formally endorsed by a coalition of 168 U.S.-based non-governmental and faith-based organizations.

Background

Strong bipartisan support for a comprehensive global food security strategy has made the United States a world leader in the fight to solve hunger, catalyzing significant progress worldwide. Today there are over 200 million fewer hungry people compared to 1990 estimates. Undernourishment and child mortality have been nearly halved during this time. These trends demonstrate that the goal of zero hunger is achievable if the positive policies and programs the U.S. has in place are sustained.

Despite this dramatic progress, one in nine people go to bed hungry every night, meaning there are 795 million chronically hungry people in the world today. Undernourishment still affects 12.9 percent of developing country populations. And in 2015, 5.9 million children under five died prematurely, with nearly half of these deaths attributable to undernutrition.

In addition, there are now four ongoing crises classified at the most severe level of humanitarian emergency. These crises in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, and Yemen are the result of internal conflicts that have caused massive population displacements. In fact, there are now over 60 million who have fled their homes worldwide, including both refugees and those internally displaced: the highest level ever recorded.

WFP, the world's largest humanitarian organization, provides critical food and nutrition support to roughly 80 million people each year. WFP estimates that their total global emergency food assistance requirements for 2017 will exceed \$7.5 billion.

International Disaster Assistance is Critical to Responding to Emergency Food Needs

Strong funding for International Disaster Assistance (IDA) is crucial to meeting today's unprecedented humanitarian needs. Between 30 to 40 percent of IDA's annual expenditures support the Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP). Managed by the Office of Food for Peace, EFSP provides cash-based emergency food assistance through voucher programs, local and regional purchasing of food, and related cash-based emergency assistance efforts that enable rapid delivery of assistance.

The ongoing conflict in Syria accounts for much of the explosion in humanitarian need. More than 11 million Syrians have fled their homes. Over 6.5 million people are internally displaced and 4.8 million have sought refuge in neighboring countries. In 2016, 13.5 million Syrians will require assistance, bringing the total UN humanitarian appeal to \$7.7 billion for refugees and families inside Syria. Unfortunately, needs are likely to remain at a similar or higher level in 2017.

EFSP provides the bulk of U.S. food assistance to victims of the conflict in Syria, displaced persons, and refugees. WFP expects approximately \$1.2 billion—about 20 percent of its annual emergency food assistance budget—will be required to provide food aid to Syrians throughout the region over the next year. EFSP supports both a food voucher system for Syrian refugees, and in-kind food for people inside Syria. In-kind food is a lifeline for those affected by the ongoing violence and the vouchers provided to refugees bolster local markets and increase dietary diversity.

Beyond Syria, major humanitarian needs will also likely persist across Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Southwest Asia. EFSP funding supports local and regional purchase of food, which in many instances is the most effective and cost efficient way to provide nutritional support to affected populations.

Lastly, IDA funding supports critical disaster-risk reduction (DRR) programs, which strengthen resilience and help reduce risk and vulnerability so communities can prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.

Congressional Leadership is Essential to Ensuring Adequate Funding for IDA

Congress has recognized the critical importance of strong funding for IDA, providing it with \$2.794 billion in FY 17. Despite the continued expansion of humanitarian need, the President's FY 17 budget proposal requests less money than was provided in the FY 16 Omnibus Appropriations bill.

WFP USA requests that Congress fund IDA at \$2.8 billion in FY 17. This would provide the flexibility to meet emergency food assistance needs and would not curtail other vital non-food resources. Though we prefer the entire amount be appropriated as base funding, this \$2.8 billion could be provided through a combination of regular IDA and Overseas Contingency Operations funding as needed to reflect Congressional budget limitations.

Community Development Fund

We also support the inclusion of administration-requested bill language to address section 412(e) of the Food for Peace Act, 7 U.S.C. 1736f(e). It is our view that U.S. Agency for International Development resources which support non-emergency, development activities can be used to satisfy the statutory requirements of the Food for Peace Act in a manner that maximizes flexibility to support both emergency and non-emergency food activities.

Nutrition

Congress has played a significant role in championing nutrition and increasing the Global Health Nutrition sub-account over the past five years, which has been life-saving for millions of children since almost half of all under-five child deaths are nutrition related. This nutrition funding supports many specific and vital nutrition activities, such as nutrition education to improve maternal diets, nutrition during pregnancy, exclusive breastfeeding, and infant and young child feeding practices. A substantial increase in the nutrition account would address the leading cause of child mortality by significantly scaling-up investments in nutrition.

In just five months, the Brazilian Government will host the second Nutrition for Growth summit, where donor and developing country governments have an opportunity to make financial and policy commitments to address the global scourge of maternal and child malnutrition. A strong U.S. government commitment in Rio is critical to helping put the world on track to meet the global nutrition targets, and ultimately, preventing malnutrition in millions of women and children worldwide.

An increase to \$230 million for the Global Health-Nutrition account will send a clear signal that the United States is committed to evidence-based nutrition-specific interventions that are critical to ensuring that children not only survive, but thrive and that their mothers will live to see it. The U.S. is poised to lead at the Nutrition for Growth conference and that needs to start with a strong prioritization of nutrition in the FY 17 budget.

Feed the Future

Feed the Future programs, funded primarily by the development assistance account, make a vital contribution to agricultural development in low-income, food-insecure countries. Feed the Future has achieved impressive results, benefiting nearly 19 million poor rural households in FY 14 by supporting higher household income through increased farm productivity and contributing to better child nutrition. Continued strong Congressional funding for Feed the Future is essential for the U.S. to do its part in sustaining progress towards reducing, and eventually eliminating, global hunger.

Conclusion

WFP USA has had tremendous success working with Congress to improve food security and reduce the number of hungry people worldwide. EFSP's funding of vouchers has dramatically improved access to food in areas with functioning markets. Making a serious pledge to nutrition funding will demonstrate that the U.S. is committed to the prevention of a leading cause of death in children under five. Feed the Future has benefited millions of the rural poor around the world by improving farm productivity. But more still needs to be done. To keep these improvements moving in a positive direction, WFP USA respectfully requests that in FY 17 this subcommittee provide:

- \$2.8 billion for International Disaster Assistance
- \$230 million for Nutrition
- \$1.2 billion for Feed the Future
- Bill language regarding the Community Development Fund and non-emergency, development activities in the Title II Food for Peace account.

**ALICE ALBRIGHT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS,
AND RELATED PROGRAMS
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

MARCH 18, 2016

Madam Chairwoman and members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to present a written statement to the Subcommittee regarding the work of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in 61 of the world's poorest countries. I respectfully ask the Subcommittee to provide at least \$75 million, under the United States Agency for International Development's Development Assistance account, as the U.S. Government's fiscal year 2017 contribution to the Global Partnership for Education. I also request that the Committee provide at least \$800 million from various accounts in the bill for overall basic education funding.

CLOSING THE GAP IN EDUCATION

GPE has supported over 22 million children, including 10 million more girls, to attend and remain in better-equipped and supported schools since 2002. The number of out of school children has dropped from 110 million in 2002 to 59 million in 2015.

In GPE supported countries, the primary school completion rate has risen more than 15% over the last 14 years. The percentage of children with access to lower secondary school in GPE supported countries has risen 20% over the last decade: 89 girls for every 100 boys now complete primary school and 82 girls for every 100 boys now complete secondary education.

However, more than 59 million children continue to be denied the right to primary education, almost half of whom will probably never enter a classroom. Over 250 million children leave primary school after a few years without basic literacy or numeracy skills.

In summary, progress has been made—but much more needs to be done. GPE is an essential part of closing the gap to bring children to school for a quality education.

GPE'S ADDED VALUE

The GPE finances the development and implementation of good quality education sector plans that bring all key partners together at country level under one national strategy and minimizes the fragmentation caused by multiple programs and approaches. GPE uses a results based funding model that requires developing country partners to commit their own domestic resources for education before receiving GPE financing and which rewards progress on learning, efficiency, equity.

GPE is working to closing the education gap with two primary goals in mind:

- 29 million children in both primary and lower secondary schools to be supported over four years, for a good quality education, 23 million of which will be in fragile and conflict affected states.
- The number of children who complete primary education annually and demonstrate core reading and numeracy skills to increase by 25 percent, from 16 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2018.

In addition, GPE supports the development of policies and strategies in these countries and provides funding to increase gender equity in basic education. GPE is also one of the largest sources of finance for basic education in an increasing number of fragile and/or conflict affected countries.

Our partner countries face a serious fragmentation challenge in the education sector and a multiplicity of actors and approaches that stretch the limited capacity and financial resources of the ministries of education in many developing countries. The GPE partnership-based operational model is designed to bring all of the major actors in the sector together at the national level within a strong and representative “local education group” that will develop, finance and monitor implementation of a single national education sector plan. This approach aligns the resources and capacities of the major players and increases the effectiveness of their support and work.

USAID and other donors are generally members of the local education groups that are at the center of this process in all countries. GPE also requires all partner countries to meet minimum levels of domestic finance for education: at least 20% of national budgets for the sector overall, with at least 45% of this supporting basic education.

SUSTAINED FUNDING FOR BASIC EDUCATION

Another challenge to closing the education gap is the lack of sufficient and predictable financing for basic education in the poorest countries. Our developing country partners do in fact provide the bulk of finance for education in their countries. However, additional resources are needed to fill a number of gaps, including principally recurring costs related to training and paying teachers, maintenance of classrooms and provision of books and other learning materials.

In response to these challenges, GPE has developed a new Strategic Plan and a powerful funding model designed to secure reform in the education systems in our eligible countries, as noted below.

GPE’S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN: 2016-2020

This past December, the Board of the Global Partnership approved a new five-year strategic plan (2016 – 2020). The new strategic plan sets out 3 goals:

- Improved learning outcomes – through quality teaching

- Increased equity, gender equality and inclusion – reaching the hardest to reach
- Effective and efficient education system – more reliable delivery of education for all children.

Accompanying the new Strategic Plan is a partnership wide results framework that confirms the roles and responsibilities of all partners, including countries, and sets targets in keeping with the above goals.

Last year the Global Partnership introduced a new, results based country financing model that increases the co-financing requirements of our eligible countries, and which focuses resources on the neediest countries and those with the most urgent education challenges. Thirty percent of the funding available to these countries is subject to confirmed achievement of stretch efficiency, equity and learning targets.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES AND PROTRACTED CRISES

The education financing challenge is evidenced most clearly in countries facing sudden shocks such as the earthquakes in Haiti and Nepal, armed conflict such as in the Central African Republic, and the influx of refugees such as in Chad. Despite its extreme level of poverty, the Government of Chad has sought to assist these Nigerian refugees and to provide them some access to education. However, the standard UN emergency appeals process was not able to secure for Chad the \$7 million required. The Government made a special “fast track” application to GPE and it was considered, approved and the funds were disbursed within a matter of weeks.

Some countries have faced fragility and conflict for decades such as Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, and generations of children have lost their chance to have attended school. Unfortunately, donor financing for education in such settings has dropped to less than 1.5% of all emergency financing.

Twenty-eight of GPE’s 61 countries are experiencing some form of instability or fragility due to an emergency or conflict and in fact a majority of the world’s out of school children reside in such countries. 50% of GPE’s disbursements in 2014 and 2015 were made to fragile and/or conflict affected countries. This growing dynamic is impacting our partners, such as UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children, as well.

Therefore, with some technical and financial support from a number of donors we have been working toward the development of a new common platform for financing education in these emergency and protracted crises countries. The goal is to increase awareness of this problem and to secure more financing to address it from both public and private donors. We anticipate that the new platform, to be hosted initially by UNICEF, a close GPE partner, will be launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in May.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 UNITED STATES SUPPORT FOR THE GPE AND BASIC EDUCATION

Madam Chairwoman, I urge the Committee to provide a fiscal year 2017 U.S. contribution to the Global Partnership for Education of \$75 million. I also urge you to support an overall level for basic education of \$800 million. Thank you for your consideration.

Statement of Mr. David D. Arnold

President, The Asia Foundation

**Prepared for the
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs**

THE ASIA FOUNDATION (TAF)

March 2016

Chairwoman, Ranking Member & Members of the Subcommittee:

I am honored to submit this testimony as President of The Asia Foundation (TAF). Over the past 62 years, The Asia Foundation has made sustained investments throughout Asia to build democratic institutions, reform economies, promote good governance, support civil society capacity, empower women, encourage responsible environmental management, and expand cooperative regional relations. These investments have helped to support political and economic reforms and stability in countries throughout the region that today are important and reliable allies for the United States. The Foundation is grateful to the Committee for its support over the years, and especially for funding TAF at \$17 million in FY2016. To sustain and build on this record of accomplishment, The Asia Foundation is again requesting \$17 million for Fiscal Year 2017, which is the same level of funding as in FY2015 and FY2016.

Established in 1954, The Asia Foundation is a private, non-profit, nongovernmental organization. An annual appropriation is authorized under The Asia Foundation Act of 1983 (22USC4402). The Act acknowledged the importance of stable funding for TAF and endorsed its ongoing value and contributions to U.S. interests in Asia. Through 18 country offices, TAF works with hundreds of established and emerging Asian partner organizations and identifies reform-minded individuals and future leaders. These investments in human capital have paid off. TAF grantees can be found throughout the public and private sectors in Asia, and are leaders and change-makers in government, industry, academia and an increasingly diverse civil society.

The Asia Foundation is first and foremost a field-based organization. Through a cost-effective combination of grant-making and direct program operations, TAF maximizes program impact while keeping costs low. TAF, on average, makes nearly 800 grants a year to partner organizations in Asia. Past Committee report language has commended the effectiveness of this grant-making role in building local capacity and strengthening civil society institutions throughout Asia, an approach both unique and needed. TAF encourages local ownership, identifies reform-minded leaders, and builds capacity to ensure sustainability. TAF promotes reform by providing training, technical assistance and seed funding to new and emerging local organizations, as well as working with established partners. TAF responds rapidly to new circumstances and delivers programs to meet local needs, improving the lives of Asia's citizens and contributing to cooperative U.S.-Asia relations. We diligently evaluate and assess our programs' impact and we are proud of our track record.

The Asia Foundation is requesting \$17,000,000 in FY 2017, the same level as in FY 2016. The 30% cut requested by the Administration to \$12,000,000 would be devastating to The Asia Foundation. The consequences of such a cut would jeopardize its invaluable field office network, particularly in countries such as Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, China and Vietnam. Such a cut would diminish TAF's ability to be responsive with innovative program activities advancing U.S. interests and meeting critical needs on the ground. Finally, it would harm TAF's ability to leverage other funding; TAF raises four dollars from non-USG sources for every dollar of direct appropriation it receives. A funding cut requiring TAF office closures and program reductions would send the wrong signal to our Asian allies about U.S. commitment to the region.

In making this request for level funding, we are very aware of budgetary pressures on the Committee. We respectfully suggest, however, that TAF is an especially cost-effective investment for the Congress in a time of budget constraints. We have appreciated the past support of the Committee in rejecting proposed cuts and sustaining funding for TAF at \$17 million, and we hope that you will do so again. A 30% cut, as proposed by the Administration, would:

- 1) **Harm TAF's ability to maintain its Asian field office network:** Appropriated funding is critical to TAF's ability to maintain its presence across Asia, specifically in countries of priority to U.S. interests and where no other organization has such history and presence on the ground, including Burma, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, China and India. Trust is built on continuity, and only through TAF's consistent local presence could it have become such a trusted and reliable partner on programs advancing democratic reform and open markets in the region. Closure of TAF offices would breach that trust and curtail TAF's effectiveness on behalf of U.S. interests. For example, enabled by trusted relations established in Sri Lanka over the past 60 years of presence and cooperation, TAF has worked on sensitive issues with both government and civil society. To help overcome longstanding ethnic divisions and build conditions for a lasting peace, TAF has responded to Sri Lanka's need to increase respect for language rights, facilitate linguistic diversity and foster social cohesion with programs ensuring that the citizens of Sri Lanka have access to public information and services in the national language of their choice. By supporting models that show how the official language policy can be implemented through simple innovations - such as tri-lingual signage, forms and instructions - TAF helped promote inclusion and increase citizens' access to services. These efforts form part of a longstanding portfolio of TAF programs to support reconciliation in the country, including community policing, community mediation and psychosocial support clinics, all of which have been recognized and institutionalized by government ministries in Sri Lanka.
- 2) **Significantly diminish its program responsiveness and flexibility:** TAF's signature approach is to be nimble and responsive to needs on the ground, and provide innovative solutions to complex problems. We convene diverse stakeholders from government, civil society and the private sector to negotiate solutions, and provide critical funding for pilot programs with local organizations that often attract other donor funding to scale up, or result in host government commitments to continuation. TAF re-opened its office in Burma in 2013, and immediately became a resource for Burmese civil society and the government in

its reform efforts. The 2015 elections were a crucial milestone in Burma's ongoing transition, but the vast majority of 30 million voters had virtually no access to the more than 6,000 candidates and 91 political parties contesting the elections. To promote voter education, rather than turning to more expensive printed material which required distribution, TAF took advantage of new technologies by working closely with the Union Election Commission, local civil society partners, and local software developers to develop the MaePay Soh API, an open-source, public and cloud-based database with detailed biographical information on all candidates, leadership information and party platforms of all political parties and related government institutions. Widely advertised on television and radio, and promoted by officials, MaePaySoh API received more than 11.7 million requests for data through mobile and web apps, with peak usage the day before and on Election Day. TAF made similarly rapid responses to new circumstances when it reopened its office in Afghanistan in February 2002, when it began operations upon Timor Leste's independence in 1999, and soon after Mongolia's break with the Soviet Union, when Mongolia's new leadership sought out TAF's help in 1989 to write a new, democratic constitution.

- 3) **Reduce TAF's ability to leverage other funding:** TAF's successful leveraging of other funds extends and increases the impact of its programs. As noted, for every dollar appropriated by the Congress to The Asia Foundation, the Foundation has leveraged over \$4 from non-USG sources. TAF was particularly successful in this regard under the stewardship of my predecessor, former Congressman Doug Bereuter. Multilateral and bilateral development agencies, including in Britain, Australia, the Netherlands, and Denmark, have recognized our value and funded a wide range of democracy and development programs. Private sector support for the Foundation has also increased. One example is TAF support for the Regional Cooperation Directorate (RCD) of the Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which TAF helped to establish in 2010. As part of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process launched in 2011, Afghanistan is working to expand cooperation with neighboring countries, and strengthen its role in regional security, political and economic cooperation. TAF provides support to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the RCD through training, inter-agency cooperation and management reforms. For this multi-year program, TAF invested \$200,000 and raised over \$2.6 million from the European Union.

A core focus of TAF is to combat violence against women. Gender based violence is prevalent throughout the Asia region, in countries such as Timor Leste, India and Cambodia where over 60% of women experience violence. The ability to leverage funding from non-U.S. public, and private sources has enabled TAF to build a robust program focused on policy reform, awareness-raising and outreach on prevention and protection, and improved law enforcement. TAF and its local partners have helped to facilitate national action plans to prevent violence against women in Timor, and institutionalize minimum standards against trafficking in Cambodia and Nepal. TAF's programs use online web portals and hotlines extend to awareness-raising in Mongolia, Cambodia, India, Nepal and Vietnam for safe migration, labor rights and information. TAF also works with police and community organizations to protect women. In India, through a mobile application used for crowdsourcing cases of violence against women, TAF and its partners have increased the reporting of incidents, improved trust between the community and the police, and increased access to justice for women.

The FY2017 cut proposed by the Administration damages TAF's efforts to make the most of every appropriated dollar. In effect, every \$1 cut in appropriations would likely result in a cut of \$5 to programs advancing U.S. interests in Asia. As valuable as public and private leveraged funds are, they are invariably tied to specific projects. Congressional funding, through this core appropriation, allows TAF to maintain its continuous on-the-ground presence throughout Asia and leverage non-USG project funds.

- 4) **Be perceived as an indication of U.S. withdrawal from Asia:** Support for TAF is seen in the region as a continued, long-term commitment by the U.S. to Asia. A reduction in TAF's field office presence resulting from a drastic funding cut would send a signal that the U.S. is reducing rather than rebalancing its commitment to Asia. As you know, Asia is an increasingly critical region to the United States for both economic and security reasons and TAF's programs contribute to the rebalance to Asia.

FY2017 PLAN

Level funding at \$17 million in FY2017 would position the Foundation to maintain and extend programs in countries struggling with corruption, internal conflicts and weak democratic processes and institutions. Continued Congressional support at \$17 million would enable TAF to:

- Counter corruption and improve public accountability efforts in Burma, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste, Vietnam and Mongolia;
- Sustain women's empowerment programs throughout Asia, including developing economic opportunity and entrepreneurship for women, supporting girls' education, and countering trafficking and gender based violence, especially during Afghanistan's transition;
- Promote engagement of traditional leaders, including religious leaders, in community development, women's empowerment, election observation and education in Indonesia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan;
- Support transitional justice in Sri Lanka and Nepal, and the Philippines' judicial reforms;
- Expand community resilience, youth leadership and security in areas vulnerable to extremist recruitment in Malaysia and other parts of Southeast Asia;
- Extend conflict resolution and peace processes in Afghanistan, the Philippines, Nepal and Burma, and in largely Muslim southern Thailand where lack of security and a long-running ethnic/religious conflict threatens national stability.
- Sustain TAF's signature initiative, the Books for Asia program, which has provided 50 million English-language books to more than 20 countries – over 583,000 in 2015 alone. Millions of Asian students and leaders have accessed to global sources of knowledge and a better understanding of the United States. At the urging of Congressional appropriators, TAF began a books program in Burma in 2007, and has distributed 183,000 books across the country to date. In 2015 alone, TAF donated over 11,000 books to 256 institutions, including 51 community and public libraries and 111 schools. Of the institutions receiving books in FY15 - such as schools, universities, libraries, and NGOs - 157 were new recipients. For this program, an investment of \$1 million leverages \$10 million in donated English language books and educational materials from U.S. publishers.

CONCLUSION: Funding at \$17 million will sustain The Asia Foundation's investments in key programs that have received Congressional encouragement. A significant cut would force TAF to close additional offices largely funded by appropriated funds – such as Burma, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, countries of priority interest to the U.S. – and would threaten other ongoing operations and programs of proven value to the U.S. Government.

We appreciate the Committee's longstanding trust of and support for The Asia Foundation. The Congressional appropriation authorized in the 1983 Asia Foundation Act has been and remains invaluable to TAF's ability to achieve results on the ground and fulfill our shared mission to maintain U.S. presence and advance U.S. interests in Asia. We respectfully urge that the Committee sustain its support for The Asia Foundation at the current level of \$17 million.

(A full listing of Asia Foundation programs may be found on our website at www.asiafoundation.org.)



**MARY C. MCQUEEN
PRESIDENT
NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS,
AND RELATED PROGRAMS
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

MARCH 18, 2016

Thank you Madam Chairwoman and members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to submit testimony for the record regarding judicial reform on behalf of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). NCSC, in association with the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), is seeking your continued support for funding in fiscal year 2017 of judicial reform as part of rule of law programs implemented through the United States Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Such programs are critical to building and sustaining democracy abroad, promoting justice for marginalized and vulnerable groups, advancing human rights, protecting vital U.S. national interests, and fighting corruption, organized crime and terrorism.

NCSC was founded more than 45 years ago at the urging of the late-Chief Justice Warren Burger to promote innovation and reform in state judiciaries across the United States. For the past two decades, NCSC has implemented more than 80 rule-of-law programs in developing countries around the globe. Our staff of attorneys and judicial reform specialists provide cutting edge research, education, and consulting services that support the justice sector. In 1992, after more than 20 years of working to promote equal, efficient and effective justice in United States state courts, NCSC responded to requests from the international donor community and formed the International Programs Division. NCSC offers a comprehensive set of resources and technical expertise, and our multidisciplinary staff works collaboratively with justice system counterparts in developing countries on a variety of reform initiatives. NCSC provides technical assistance, educational programs, leadership/management training, applied research and technological innovation to help justice systems worldwide strengthen and improve the rule of law.

Let me acknowledge the difficult task before you in making what are clearly important decisions regarding budget priorities. A key question is: What will the United States gain from funding rule of law programs abroad? Simply put, countries that have stable justice systems can

become reliable democratic partners, not the source of costly conflicts and instability that impact America's global commitments.

Through a variety of programs and efforts, NCSC promotes the rule of law and government accountability, which is at the heart of our national system of values. NCSC International engages in strategically targeted justice sector reform programs in fragile states with weak or divided democratic institutions. These programs are part of an effort to promote political and social stability, to fight corruption, to protect the rights of individuals, and to create conditions that foster economic prosperity. NCSC's staff has worked around the world, engaging in comprehensive rule of law projects in Africa and the Middle East, Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition to implementing rule of law and judicial reform programs, our International Visitors Education Program is an important part of our efforts to promote justice system reform and our values as a nation. Through this program we generally host more than 300 judges and justice system officials annually. In 2015 alone, we hosted delegations from Brazil, China, Morocco, and South Africa, offering valuable exchanges between U.S. and foreign jurists. We provide training through a combination of briefings and seminars on the U.S. justice system, continuing legal education, and special issues seminars such as judicial independence, governance, and relations with the other branches of government. NCSC's unique state-level perspective allows us to advise countries grappling with issues not only related to federalism and decentralization but also virtually every aspect of our legal system.

Beyond the United States, NCSC is currently working in Sub-Saharan Africa (Uganda, Nigeria); in the North Africa (Morocco and Tunisia); in Latin America and the Caribbean (Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Dominican Republic and Belize); in Eastern Europe (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo); and South Asia (Bangladesh). We have conducted sector-wide justice reform assessments, assisted with strategic planning and implementation, and provided institutional capacity building support to ministries, courts, prosecutors, legal defense institutions, elementary and secondary school systems, national assemblies, and law schools. In partnership with the U.S. donor agencies and local counterparts, we have developed sustainable continuing legal education programs for judges and lawyers; supplied infrastructure and software improvements to courts and prosecutors; harmonized criminal procedures and coordination between police, prosecutors, and courts; established small-claims courts and alternative dispute resolution services; trained court administrators, lawyers, and prosecutors; implemented multi-media public awareness and access to justice initiatives; and assisted national assemblies by improving their legislative drafting processes.

NCSC continues to develop and utilize a number of tools customized to provide justice system agencies with quick assistance. For example, the Center has developed an integrated, automated court case management system that is sufficiently "generic" to allow for customization and implementation of case management functions on a variety of platforms. Our CourtTools® performance management system has been adapted in other countries, such as Kosovo, to give local leaders a set of tools to assess performance of the court system. As a result, judges and court leaders are able to gain insight into the functioning of their courts and implement changes that improve access, timeliness, efficiency and ethics in light of objective

data. Having maintained a continued presence in Kosovo since 2001, NCSC's efforts have helped Kosovo with the transition from international to local control; assisted in reforming and restructuring the courts and prosecutorial system to promote effective and impartial justice; and improved the efficiency of court operations both administratively and jurisdictionally. We have designed and implemented pilot programs in foreign countries that help judges, prosecutors, court officials, and other professional implement reforms and become change agents within their own institutions.

Examples of recent initiatives NCSC has implemented on behalf of U.S. Government agencies and in furtherance of U.S. government goals include:

- NCSC is also currently implementing a five-year USAID judicial reform and government accountability project in Serbia. The project is strengthening the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and the administration of justice in Serbia, as well as building the capacity of Serbia's anti-corruption agency, state audit institute, and other agencies to detect and prevent corruption. NCSC administers a grants program that supports the role of civil society organizations in raising public awareness about justice sector reforms and government corruption. NCSC has designed and is implementing an automated case management system in 46 misdemeanor courts, resulting in greater case management efficiencies and the enforcement of court fines and fees.
- In Bangladesh, NCSC is supporting citizens' access to justice by improving the legal framework for legal aid services, improving the legal aid services provided to the public, increasing the public's understanding of legal aid and legal services, and further developing their ability to evaluate the performance of judges.
- NCSC is working in Uganda to improve the systems for adjudication of land disputes and the systems that administer the records of lands and property. These disputes are a major driver of conflict in Uganda, and improving the administration of land dispute resolution systems will have a significant impact on the reduction of conflict in Uganda.
- In Nigeria, NCSC is working with the National Judicial Council of Nigeria to implement an electronic case management system, build institutional capacity to govern complicated projects, and improve communications software.
- In Colombia, NCSC is providing services for capacity building and training to support the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and host country efforts to respond to transnational and organized crime impacting the Colombia, the U.S. and neighboring countries.
- In Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Panama, NCSC is working to advance systems for juvenile justice and rehabilitation as part of a comprehensive effort to improve justice and security in the region.
- In the Caribbean Basin, NCSC is managing training efforts to improve capacity of justice sector institutions, particularly in the area of juvenile justice.

- In Morocco, NCSC is undertaking a justice sector feasibility study that will stake out future rule of law initiatives in that country.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, NCSC is implementing a partnership program with 19 prosecutor offices to strengthen their capacity to investigate and prosecute government corruption and economic crime cases, as well as supporting other reform initiatives such as improving the system for enforcing civil judgments and promoting integrity of public institutions through professional ethics and disciplinary reforms.

NCSC and our colleague organizations share one ambition: to improve the lives of people through justice system reform that is essential to ensuring political stability, social harmony, and economic prosperity. We bear witness to the impact U.S.-funded rule of law programs have had abroad in strengthening justice systems and developing local professional capacity to sustain the reform process.

James Madison observed in the Federalist Papers #51 that justice must forever be pursued until obtained or until liberty is lost in its pursuit. The rule of law, woven through the several branches of government and the people themselves, is the necessary fabric of justice. The rule of law programs that NCSC implements abroad touch all branches of government and engage numerous government and societal actors, who are trying to build stable civil societies rooted in law. In the absence of rule of law, government is unaccountable to the people and inevitably becomes corrupt and unjust – an outcome that the U.S.-funded rule of law projects help to avert every year in all regions of the world.

Today, in parts of the world, government corruption is a key source of financing for criminal and terrorist organizations that know no borders, posing grave threats to developing and developed countries alike. U.S.-funded democracy programs help governments and citizens in developing countries pursue justice and realize liberty – and in the process become America’s ally in the global fight against corruption, terrorism, and other threats to democracy.

Madam Chairwoman, on behalf of NCSC, I urge that this Committee in its fiscal year 2017 State, Foreign Operations bill continue to support and expand efforts by the Department of State and USAID to strengthen judicial reform programs as part of an overall emphasis on rule of law. Continued investments in judicial reform as part of rule of law programs abroad will save America from costly interventions in far-away places. Above all, U.S. support for rule of law programs abroad will demonstrate our nation’s on-going commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of all citizens and opening the opportunities of democracy to everyone.



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**STATEMENT BY
SUE PETRISIN, KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL, PRESIDENT
KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS,
AND RELATED PROGRAMS
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

MARCH 18, 2016

Madam Chairwoman, I am Sue Petrisin, the 2015-16 President of Kiwanis International, a volunteer leadership position. I live in Lansing, Michigan, and it is a pleasure to submit my testimony to the Subcommittee on behalf of more than 5,100 Kiwanis clubs and more than 432,000 Kiwanis-family members in the United States. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of *The Eliminate Project: Kiwanis eliminating maternal and neonatal tetanus* (MNT). We are seeking the support of this Committee to recommend that the U.S. Agency for International Development identify within the Maternal and Child Health account \$3,000,000 for maternal and neonatal tetanus programs. This funding would come from USAID's Global Health account.

Tetanus is a preventable disease that kills one baby every eleven minutes. The participation by the United States through USAID is very important to the success of eliminating MNT. We urge that USAID strengthen their programs on MNT in fiscal year 2017 to target the poorest, most underserved women and children in the world.

Since both the Chair and Ranking Member of this Subcommittee are represented by women, I am proud to submit this testimony for the record as the first woman elected to be president of Kiwanis International.

On behalf of Kiwanis International and Kiwanis International Foundation, I want to thank you for your past and continuing support of our first Global Campaign for Children, ending Iodine Deficiency Disorders. I urge you to also support our second and current campaign to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus from the face of the earth.

KIWANIS COMMITMENT TO ELIMINATE MATERNAL AND NEONATAL TETANUS

In July of 2011 Kiwanis launched The Eliminate Project: Kiwanis eliminating maternal and neonatal tetanus, a global campaign that will save or protect more than 61 million mothers and newborns.

As part of this campaign, Kiwanis International committed to and has raised \$110 million to immunize more than 61 million women in countries where MNT is still a major health threat. More than 6,000 Kiwanis-family members and clubs have contributed to the fundraising campaign.

During this project, Kiwanis International is focusing where the need is greatest: the populations least served. We are now tackling the hardest leg of a difficult journey. MNT has been eliminated in 35 countries. Twenty-four countries remain at risk, with more than 61 million women who still need to be vaccinated.

Kiwanis has been working in partnership with USAID to strengthen their programs on MNT. Funding under the USAID Maternal and Child Health account is an important element, especially in Pakistan and Nigeria, in helping to eliminate MNT.

MATERNAL AND NEONATAL TETANUS

MNT results when tetanus spores, which are present in soil everywhere, enter the bloodstream. It is mainly caused by a lack of access to sanitary birthing conditions, unclean instruments used to cut the umbilical cord and unclean post-partum cord care.

In many developing countries, women give birth at home without the support of a healthcare worker and without a clean, sterile blade to cut the umbilical cord. This, and other factors, can lead to tetanus poisoning in the newborn baby, causing severe spasms and an excruciatingly painful death. It is a terrible disease in which human contact exacerbates the baby's pain; so a mother's touch hurts, leaving the baby to writhe in agony, unheld, for days until he or she dies. Mothers are not even able to comfort their babies due to the excruciating pain they would experience from a loving touch. The fatality rate for MNT can be as high as 100 percent in underserved areas. Once the disease is contracted, a new-born usually dies within seven days.

Most mothers and newborns who die of tetanus live in areas of Africa, and South and Southeast Asia, where many women are poor, have little access to health care, have limited information about safe delivery procedures and continue harmful post-partum cord care practices.

MNT is easily prevented by giving women of childbearing age a series of three vaccine doses, which costs roughly \$1.80. This cost includes the vaccinations, syringes, safe storage, transportation and more.

Women who are properly vaccinated with the tetanus vaccine will have immunity through most of their childbearing years. Babies born to mothers who have been vaccinated will be protected through the first two months of life.

When women are vaccinated for tetanus and learn about maternal health, they become empowered to take control of their well-being and that of their newborns. We believe these women matter, they deserve to give birth to healthy babies, and their babies deserve to achieve their full human potential.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

I can visualize a world without tetanus because what we are doing is working and is making a difference.

My visit with UNICEF to Cambodia, a country that is now validated free of maternal and neonatal tetanus will stay with me forever. As I watched the mothers and their babies wait for their immunizations, I could not help but compare the conditions of their health clinic to those here in the United States. Plastic chairs lined up by the table, many with broken legs. A splintered wooden table propped up on cement blocks. An old scale for weighing the baby. Mothers holding their yellow card which contained their medical records. Pigs running under our feet. Dusty and dirty. Hot and sunny. No sanitary conditions. No electronic medical records. No privacy.

And while the conditions would not be acceptable here in the United States, the mothers were happy to be there waiting for their immunizations. There was no appointment book or receptionist. It was first come first serve. Eager to learn how to care for their children and a chance to talk about their life. They know no different.

Here in the United States we would not step foot in a facility that was dusty or dirty or had pigs running around inside. But because of where we were born, we are privy to a facility that is clean and sanitary. Why should these mothers and babies have anything different?

SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS

We believe we have a very effective partnership with UNICEF and urge you to support UNICEF in its request for a U. S. fiscal year 2017 contribution for the UNICEF regular resource budget of \$132.5 million.

CONCLUSION

The maternal neonatal tetanus elimination plans are in place. Countries are ready for implementation. All that remains is one final funding push. One push to rid the earth of this devastating disease.

Madam Chairwoman, I ask you to join us in this final push. Help us to eliminate this terrible disease and ensure that no baby suffers this excruciating seven-day death ever again. I respectfully request that the Committee recommends in fiscal year 2017 that USAID identify within the Maternal and Child Health account \$3,000,000 for the elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus.

Thank you for your consideration.

STATEMENT BY

**KATHY SPAHN, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
HELEN KELLER INTERNATIONAL**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS,
AND RELATED PROGRAMS
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

MARCH 18, 2016

Madam Chairwoman,

I am Kathy Spahn, President and Chief Executive Officer of Helen Keller International, and it is a pleasure to provide testimony for the record for the Subcommittee on critical programs in global health and development. I urge the Subcommittee to recommend in fiscal year 2017 at least \$3.5 million for blind children; at least \$100 million for Neglected Tropical Diseases; at least \$23 million for vitamin A; and \$230 million for nutrition in the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Global Health and Development accounts. I also urge you to support \$880 million for the Maternal and Child Health account.

Headquartered in the United States, Helen Keller International (HKI) currently offers programs in 21 countries in Africa and Asia as well as the United States. Co-founded in 1915 by the deaf-blind crusader Helen Keller, HKI is a leading nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing blindness and reducing malnutrition worldwide. Our programs serve more than 285 million vulnerable people each year.

But the need is still great. Nearly 39 million people across the globe are blind, most of them living in the developing world. Two billion people are malnourished, leading to the deaths of 2.7 million young children each year as nearly half of all child deaths under the age of five are due to malnutrition. Most blindness and malnutrition is preventable or treatable and the solutions are known, available and inexpensive. What's needed now is the right level of support.

BLIND CHILDREN

According to the World Health Organization, every minute somewhere in the world a child goes blind. There are currently 1.4 million blind children worldwide and much of that suffering could have been avoided. This year, as many as 500,000 children will lose their sight due to vitamin A Deficiency, despite the fact this condition can be treated for just over \$1 per year per child. Blind children living in poverty in developing countries must depend on their families, many of whom can barely afford to feed themselves, and on government health systems with limited capacity to meet their needs. They are often neglected and rarely receive opportunities to attend school or develop the skills to become productive members of society.

HKI uses cost-effective, proven strategies to prevent and treat vision loss in children. Our solutions include simple and inexpensive operations and vision correction programs for children in need, as well as building the capacity of local doctors and health systems to better serve their own communities in the long term.

This House Subcommittee has consistently supported a program for blind children in developing countries. In partnership with USAID, the program has helped to save the sight of hundreds of thousands of children. I urge the Subcommittee to continue the Blind Children funding at a level of at least \$3.5 million for fiscal year 2017.

Madam Chairwoman, I also wish to point out an inconsistency in the USAID administration of the blind children program. USAID has limited grants to U.S. non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to \$100,000 while allowing non-U.S. NGOs to participate in grants of up to \$350,000. I urge you to include language in the Committee report eliminating the restriction on U.S. NGOs.

VITAMIN A DEFICIENCY

The World Health Organization estimates that 250 million pre-school children worldwide are vitamin A deficient. This silent syndrome compromises immune system function, leaving young children unable to fight common childhood infections such as measles or diarrhea. Vitamin A is essential for growth, eye health, cognitive development and immune system function and is a key determinant of maternal and child survival.

Providing vitamin A to children between six months and five years of age reduces mortality by an average of 23% overall, and helps prevent disease, visual impairment and blindness. Vitamin A supplementation is considered one of the world's most cost-effective public health interventions, costing just over \$1 per child per year to prevent vitamin A-related blindness and improve a child's chance of survival. Helen Keller International's multi-pronged approach to combat vitamin A deficiency in some of the world's most vulnerable communities has been applauded internationally.

With the past support of USAID, HKI has become a recognized leader in distributing vitamin A capsules to children in countries across the world. I urge the Subcommittee to provide at least \$23 million for vitamin A for fiscal year 2017.

NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) blind, disfigure, kill and disable people in the world's poorest communities. According to the World Health Organization, NTDs infect one in six people worldwide, including half a billion children, and are responsible for more than 500,000 deaths each year. They include trachoma, the leading cause of preventable blindness which has left over 1.2 million people irreversibly blind; onchocerciasis or river blindness, for which 90 million people worldwide are at risk of infection; intestinal worms, which infect two billion people; and other debilitating, painful, and sometimes deadly illnesses.

Right now, these “Diseases of Poverty” are keeping children from attending school and adults from being able to work, severely limiting economic productivity in the developing world, resulting in economic losses in the billions of dollars a year and trapping more than one billion people in a cycle of poverty and disease. Research has shown that eliminating NTDs saves lives and can allow millions to climb out of poverty.

The USAID Neglected Tropical Diseases program has already made possible the treatment of more than 250 million people worldwide as part of large scale disease control and elimination strategies. With USAID support and the generous donations of pharmaceutical manufacturers including GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson & Johnson, Merck and Pfizer, HKI has been able to support mass drug administration throughout Africa and contribute toward the milestone one billionth NTD treatment being administered in 2014. Such partnerships have helped the U.S. become the global leader in increasing access to medicines to treat the most common NTDs.

For several decades, Helen Keller International has been a recognized leader in addressing blinding trachoma and onchocerciasis. In Africa we support the provision of sight-saving surgeries for thousands of individuals suffering from trichiasis (the blinding phase of trachoma) and work with our local partners to consistently improve surgical quality and patient outcomes. We also implement school-based de-worming programs that have had an enormously positive impact on children in Africa and Asia. In 2015, with support from USAID, Helen Keller International began leading a new five-year project in Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Ethiopia aimed at managing morbidity and preventing disability related to trachoma and lymphatic filariasis.

With the leadership and support of USAID, we are successfully moving toward the global elimination by 2020 of lymphatic filariasis and trachoma, and the control of schistosomiasis, soil-transmitted helminths and river blindness. I also believe that NTD program achievements could be greatly strengthened by increased cross coordination among NTD, nutrition, maternal and child health, and education programs.

I urge the Subcommittee to continue the United States’ leadership in Neglected Tropical Diseases by supporting continued funding of at least \$100 million for the ongoing integrated response to NTDs.

NUTRITION

Malnutrition remains a major public health crisis globally, and is not only a symptom of not having enough food, but not having enough of the *right* food. Nearly 161 million children are stunted due to chronic malnutrition; these children will suffer lifelong, often irreversible physical and cognitive damage as a result. If we increase funding, we can prevent millions of women and children from suffering the plight of malnutrition and not reaching their full potential. Greater investment in nutrition unlocks enormous gains in health and human capital and can prevent an annual loss of up to 12% of a country’s GDP. According to recent estimates, every \$1 that is invested in stunting reduction generates about \$18 in economic returns. Investing in nutrition improves the lives of women and children, in turn uplifting entire communities and countries.

Globally we have a unique opportunity with the up-coming *Nutrition for Growth (N4G) summit* to be held on the eve of the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil for governments, including the U.S. government (USG) to make bold financial and political pledges to increase resources for improving nutrition. This is the time to reaffirm the USG's longstanding commitment to nutrition and cement the importance of nutrition on the global stage.

HKI supports the continuation and expansion of nutrition programs to support infants, young children and women of reproductive age and asks that the Subcommittee strongly recommend \$230 million under the Nutrition-specific account within global health programs for fiscal year 2017. With this forward-looking commitment and an eye on the *Nutrition for Growth summit*, the USG will remain a valued global leader in combating the scourge of malnutrition and in doing so can also encourage essential investments by other countries and donors.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Vitamin and mineral deficiencies cause premature death, disability, and reduced work capacity in many parts of the world. Anemia affects 38% of pregnant woman and 40% of pre-school children in the developing world. The consequences are dire: pregnancy complications, increased risk of maternal death, and delayed mental and physical development in children.

With Helen Keller International's technical assistance support, the reach of national food fortification efforts has grown substantially in 19 countries across eastern, southern and west Africa and now covers about 285 million consumers with vitamin A fortified cooking oil and 293 million consumers with iron folate fortified wheat flour.

Investments in food security and agriculture programs that explicitly focus on improving nutrition in vulnerable populations through access to nutritious foods can produce long term gains in child survival and health. I urge the Subcommittee to support a food security and agricultural strategy which includes improvements in nutrition as a central objective with measurable outcomes and puts the focus on supporting smallholder families, particularly women farmers and other vulnerable populations.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Maternal and child malnutrition is an underlying cause in nearly half of child deaths, and continues to be a cause and consequence of diseases and disability in the children who survive. I urge the Subcommittee to recommend funding of at least \$880 million for Maternal and Child Health in fiscal year 2017 to address malnutrition and other programs related to child survival and maternal health.

CONCLUSION

For nearly a century, Helen Keller International has saved the sight and lives of millions. Today, we are as determined as ever to accomplish even more on behalf of children and adults in developing countries. Helen Keller may have said it the best, "*Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.*" Thank you for your consideration.

Jill Kermes
Senior Corporate Affairs Officer
SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey and members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs; it is with great pleasure that we submit the following testimony for the record:

SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment is committed to the care, conservation, rescue and research of wild animals. Our passionate and committed employees work with these animals every day and our commitment to conservation and research has led to advances in the care of animals in both zoological facilities and wild populations worldwide. In addition, The SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, a 501(c) (3) non-profit private foundation, has dedicated its resources in the areas of species research, habitat protection, animal rescue and rehabilitation and conservation education. Since its launch, the Fund has granted over \$10 million to more than 500 projects in countries around the world.

The oversight hearing on February 3rd underscores the significant domestic and global threats posed by global wildlife trafficking and animal poaching practices that contribute to the extinction of elephants and other animal species in the wild- a concern that is deeply personal for us. Wildlife trafficking ranks among the top five global crimes and has rapidly escalated in scale, sophistication and violence. The increased demand and illicit sale and trade of ivory in the United States and abroad generates an annual estimated \$8 to \$10 billion, fueling the slaughter of elephants and contributing to increased wildlife trafficking and poaching practices. In response, SeaWorld strongly supports key bipartisan legislation including House passed HR 2494, *Global Anti-Poaching Act* introduced by Representative Edward R. Royce (R-CA) and Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY) and the pending Senate companion bill S 2385, *Eliminate, Neutralize, and Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking Act* introduced by Senator Christopher Coons (D-DE) and Senator Jeff Flake (R-AZ).

HR 2494 and S 2385 aim to halt wildlife crime and create greater legal consequences and disincentives for poaching, nationally and internationally, discouraging the illicit trade driving the extinction of elephants and other endangered animal species in the wild. SeaWorld is pleased to join other conservation organizations in support of moving this bi-partisan legislation forward in the Senate.

We thank you and the Subcommittee's concentrated efforts in making the eradication of Wildlife Trafficking and poaching practices a top priority. Together we can make significant strides toward eradicating illicit practices and promoting the conservation of wild animal species and habitats.

Azerbaijan and Armenia: Status and Recommendations

Presented By:
Dr. L. R. Lawrence, Jr.
President
Bob Lawrence & Associates, Inc.

Prepared for the
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

Department of State Budget Request – FY 2017

March 24, 2016

Madame Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee: My name is Bob Lawrence, and I am President of Bob Lawrence & Associates, Inc., a consulting firm headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia for the past 29 years. For the past 11 years, we have worked with Renaissance Associates, SA, a private sector group of Azerbaijani businessmen with offices in Baku and in Zug, Switzerland. I am here, today, to discuss the situation in the South Caucasus and to make recommendations for the Department of State concerning some things which will improve the situation there for the people and businesses affected. My testimony addresses a variety of salient things which have happened in Azerbaijan and Armenia over the past few years, followed by recommendations for actions which this Subcommittee could take in relation to Foreign Operations Appropriations affecting the Department of State and USAID.

Importance of Azerbaijan to the United States:

Azerbaijan is important to the interests of the United States, and the level of importance is growing. In particular, Azerbaijan is important to the defense of ourselves and our allies, and to our and their energy security and regional intelligence.

Defense: Of all the countries in the Eurasian region, Azerbaijan has been the strongest and most dependable ally in the War on Terror. Azerbaijan has provided troops to fight on our side in Iraq and Afghanistan, where they have served with honor. Over 40% of our materiel supplies go through Azerbaijan, and our planes refuel at Azerbaijani air bases. Our troops coming out of Afghanistan pass, with safety, across the Caspian to Baku, and across Azerbaijan as a transit path to Western Europe.

Azerbaijan and Israel continue to strengthen their trade and friendship. About 40% of Israel's needed oil and gas products come from Azerbaijan, and Azerbaijan buys military equipment from Israel.

Energy Security: Azerbaijani oil and gas provide a critical, alternate energy supply to Europe, which is otherwise dominated by Russian interests. Azeri oil flows up pipelines thru Georgia, between Russia and Armenia, thru Turkey to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. Azeri

gas will soon flow thru Turkey and up into Europe utilizing the TANAP and TAP pipelines. This Azeri supply is critical to the security and wellbeing of the people of Europe. Without Azeri oil and gas, Europe would be even more dependent on Russian energy resources than it is today. It is apparent that this dependence on Russian energy has dampened Europe's, and in particular Germany's, willingness to invoke tougher sanctions against Russia to deter the aggression in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. Under these circumstances, supporting Azerbaijan as an independent energy alternative for Europe is more critical than ever.

Intelligence: Being located in such a critical location on the "Silk Road" in Eurasia, Azerbaijan becomes a center of information regarding activities in the region. Again, this underscores the critical nature of our relationship with this country. Of particular importance is Nuclear Security and the information and data from the region regarding nuclear activities. Azerbaijan is bordered by Russia and Iran with Kazakhstan nearby and North Korea not that far away.

While Azerbaijan continues to grow in importance to the region, Armenia has become a center for international criminals and crime. In March 2012, before the House and the Senate, FBI Director Robert Mueller presented this statement: ***Organized Crime: Today, international criminal enterprises run multi-national, multi-billion-dollar schemes from start to finish. For example, late last year, an investigation by the FBI and its partners led to the indictment and arrest of over 70 members and associates of an Armenian organized crime ring for their role in nearly \$170 million in health care fraud [in the United States]. This case, which involved more than 160 medical clinics, was the culmination of a national level, multi-agency, intelligence-driven investigation. To date, it remains the largest Medicare fraud scheme ever committed by a single enterprise and criminally charged by the Department of Justice.***

An Armenian newspaper, published in Yerevan, published a story claiming that 30 members of the above Armenian crime ring were able to escape the United States and return to Armenia, where the Armenian government is refusing to extradite them back to the United States. Other news articles indicate that these criminals brought tens of millions of dollars with them. There is no indication that any of them or any of their stolen money has ever been returned from Armenia to the United States.

Madame Chairman, here is a situation where a rogue nation, Armenia, is clearly protecting criminals who targeted the United States to steal \$170 Million from Medicare. Armenia has yet to comply with four United Nations Security Council directives, instructing them to leave the lands of Azerbaijan which they presently occupy. Armenian snipers have killed small Azeri children in the Line of Contact between Azeri and Armenian forces; murders which have never been investigated. More recently, Armenian combatants in the Line of Contact machine-gunned an Azeri elementary school. Fortunately, the concrete walls of the school kept the children safe. Yet, there are still members of Congress who want to give tens of millions of dollars of American taxpayer's money to Armenia for "Assistance."

In the Caucasus, there is a saying that "The People Vote With Their Feet." In the past few years, Azerbaijan has experienced population growth in the range of 10%, almost entirely from immigration. The largest components of the immigrating populations come from Turkey,

Georgia, and China. There are even about 30,000 immigrants from Armenia who have settled in Azerbaijan for a better life. Clearly, even in a time of stress with oil prices falling, those in the region feel that Azerbaijan offers the best opportunities for good jobs, security, food, and the opportunity to raise a family in safety and security. Armenia, on the other hand, is experiencing heavy emigration out of the country and the occupied territories. For instance, Nagorno-Karabakh, an autonomous province of Azerbaijan, now occupied by Armenia, which had a population of 185,000 in the early 1990's, now has an estimated population of between 25,000 and 35,000. On March 19, 2013, an Armenian newspaper reported; **"The Number of those that left Armenia grows by over 56 percent!"** The article goes on: ***YEREVAN. – In line with the official data issued by the Armenian State Migration Service, the negative difference between those that departed from Armenia and those that arrived in the country in January – February 2013 is 22,122.*** The voting with feet continues at a high rate.

Present Status of Nagorno Karabakh:

Azerbaijan has had almost 1/5 of its territory under occupation for 25 years now by Armenian soldiers, who control and do as they please in Nagorno-Karabakh and 7 (seven) surrounding regions of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has suffered under this occupation, with over one million refugees and internally displaced persons. There are several United Nations Resolutions which have been passed (UNSC 822, 853, 874 and 887/1993), as well as a number of statements from the U.S. Congress, OSCE, EU and Council of Europe, all supporting the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. This year, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) also passed a Resolution directing that Armenia remove its forces from the territories of Azerbaijan.

Nigar Orujova authored the following information: PACE cannot ignore the problems of Nagorno-Karabakh and the sufferings of the ordinary people who are facing the shortage of water from the reservoir controlled by Armenia, said MP Milica Markovic. "The matter rests in the population of the Council of Europe and the OSCE member-state and the humanitarian and social problems concerning us directly," she said. Sarsang reservoir was built during the USSR in 1976 to provide residents of the border areas with water and irrigate agriculture. However, Armenia captured Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding regions from Azerbaijan in a war that followed the Soviet breakup in 1991. More than 20,000 Azerbaijanis were killed and nearly 1 million Azerbaijanis became refugees and displaced people as a result of the war.

After the occupation of these lands, Armenia uses this reservoir as a tool of humanitarian and ecological terror. In winter months, the Armenian side intentionally opens the floodgates and creates conditions for over flooding the surrounding areas. In summer months, Armenia does not allow inhabitants to use the reservoir. As a result, there are serious problems in providing people with water, irrigating agriculture and preserving biodiversity. Markovic noted that the use of water, according to the international conventions, is an integral part of human rights. In the case of the Sarsang Reservoir, should it rupture through a man-made or natural incident, 400,000 people will be at risk due to the extensive structure of the reservoir and its dams and canals.

Adoption of resolution is the success of Azerbaijani diplomacy: analyst - Adoption of one of the two reports on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh region at such a forum as the PACE, in spite of the significant presence of pro-Armenian forces, in favor of Baku is the

success of Azerbaijani diplomacy, Azerbaijani political scientist Fikret Sadikhov told Trend news service. This document states that the people in these regions are faced with environmental and humanitarian problems.

Madame Chairman; I thank you for the opportunity to present this information in this testimony. Based on the continuing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the potential crises caused by these events, I would like to offer the following suggestions for actions:

- 1) Rescind Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act. This Section is bad policy and should be permanently revoked. It is insulting to Azerbaijan, our strongest ally in the Caucasus. Azerbaijan is 83% of the Caucasus economy, and Section 907 restricts U.S. trade with them while Russia is trying to be closer to them. Section 907 was passed in 1993, 22 years ago, when Azerbaijan played an entirely different role in world affairs. Today, Azerbaijan is a key ally of the Western world and Israel. 907 was passed in the Congress through the strong lobbying efforts of Mourad Topalian, an Armenian criminal who was later convicted of terrorism and served 6 years in the American Federal prison system. There is no benefit to this trade restricting, terrorist-inspired Section of the law.
- 2) Direct USAID to provide funding to Azerbaijan to examine and maintain the Sarsang Reservoir. The condition of the Sarsang dam is considered to be in disrepair. Should it fail, it will threaten the lives and livelihoods of some 400,000 people in the occupied, frontier territories of Azerbaijan.
- 3) Encourage the enforcement of the UN Resolutions and the PACE resolution calling for Armenia to remove its armed forces and stop the occupation of 20% of Azerbaijan.



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Friends of the Global Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Written Testimony for the Record for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017

Submitted by Houston Ernst, Policy Director, Friends of the Global Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Submitted to the United States House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member Lowey, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the record on the Obama Administration's budget request for the State Department and related agencies for FY 2017. Friends of the Global Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria ("Friends"), an organization dedicated to sustaining and expanding U.S. support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria ("Global Fund"), appreciates this opportunity to highlight the lifesaving work of the Global Fund and discuss ways in which the United States can remain the global leader in the fight against these three diseases. As this Subcommittee begins its work on the FY 2017 appropriations bill for the State Department, foreign operations and related programs, Friends requests **\$1.35 billion for the Global Fund**, an amount consistent with the President's FY 2017 budget request and the FY 2016 enacted funding level.

Friends also supports continued robust funding for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), and for global tuberculosis programs implemented by USAID. The Global Fund and these bilateral programs depend on each other for mutual success. Robust funding for all is critical to continuing the fight and ending these epidemics once and for all. Furthermore, strong funding for these programs in FY 2017 will enable the United States to continue to lead by example and show the rest of the world that we remain committed to fighting these three diseases and saving lives around the world.

As you know, the Global Fund was created in 2002 and is the world's largest public health financier, directing the world's money to programs providing treatment, care and prevention for people impacted by HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. By partnering with other governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the diseases, the Global Fund raises and invests nearly \$4 billion a year to support programs run in more than 100 countries. Because of these investments and this Subcommittee's strong support for U.S. contributions to global health, the Global Fund's cumulative programmatic impact up to the end of 2015 has achieved the following: 9.2 million people are currently receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV/AIDS; 3.6 million HIV-positive pregnant women have been provided with treatment and care to prevent transmission of the disease to their children; 15.1 million cases of tuberculosis have been detected and treated; 659 million insecticide-treated bed nets have been distributed to protect vulnerable men, women and children against malaria; and 582 million cases of malaria have been treated.

The Global Fund doesn't work alone, of course. It works closely with PEPFAR, PMI and USAID. The Global Fund and PEPFAR work together to build capacity, leverage investments, mobilize resources and provide stable external financing. They also collaborate to focus on key and vulnerable populations, including adolescent girls and young women. The Global Fund's primary role is to ensure that there is an integrated, efficient and effective HIV/AIDS response on the country level, while PEPFAR utilizes Global Fund resources and works on the ground to provide direct technical support. The results speak for themselves, not only saving millions of lives but also preventing millions of new HIV infections. As of September 2015, PEPFAR was supporting 9.5 million people on antiretroviral treatment. The Global Fund continues to impress with scale-up of its HIV/AIDS programs. In the first half of 2015, an additional 500,000 people were put on treatment for HIV in programs supported by the Global Fund, bringing the total to 8.6 million people, which represents a 17 percent increase over the prior year.

The Global Fund is the largest provider of international donor funding for the fight against tuberculosis, providing more than 70 percent of financing for tuberculosis programs worldwide. The Global Fund and USAID work together to identify and fill in gaps in national tuberculosis programs and strategies and to ensure funding and programs are not duplicative. As of mid-2015, Global Fund-financed tuberculosis programs have detected and treated 15 million tuberculosis cases, a 21 percent increase from mid-2014, and have successfully treated 11 million cases of the disease.

Together with PMI, the Global Fund and the U.S. government provide about 75 percent of all funding for global malaria programs. Since 2000, global investments to fight malaria have helped save more than 6.2 million lives, and global mortality rates have declined by 60 percent among all age groups and by 65 percent among children under five.

As this Subcommittee is well aware, the Global Fund has gone through transformative changes in recent years. It continues building off of past successes by implementing new policies and innovative procedures to further enhance its transparency and efficiency. The recent creation of a new and innovative funding model has been central to these efforts. The funding model is designed to engage implementers and partners more effectively to assist countries achieve maximum impact through strategic investments from the Global Fund.

Effectively encouraging and stimulating domestic investments in health is an essential component of the Global Fund's move toward sustainability. The Global Fund's funding model includes provisions to incentivize increased domestic financing for health programs. Specifically, it requires mandatory counterpart financing for all Global Fund grants, thereby encouraging implementing countries to take increased ownership of their health systems. The Global Fund supports ministries of health and finance to access an additional 15 percent of a country's resource allocation as domestic resources for health increase. These efforts have led to more than \$5 billion in commitments from implementing countries to increase their own domestic investments in health. These commitments not only signal country ownership and a clear path to achieve sustainability, they are also key to our collective goal to end HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics.

The Global Fund has also continued to increase engagement with private sector companies and foundations as indispensable partners in the fight against the three diseases. Private sector organizations and foundations are important partners of the Global Fund and play a pivotal role not only by providing financial resources but contributing their expertise to enhance the impact of Global Fund-supported programs. To date, the Global Fund has received more than \$1.69 billion from private sector partners and foundations, including from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and (RED). Other partners such as Coca-Cola, SAP, Ecobank, Munich RE, and others have shared their expertise and provided training to strengthen health systems and improve program implementation.

(RED), founded by Bono and Bobby Shriver in 2006, recently celebrated 10 years of contributions to the fight against HIV/AIDS. In the last 10 years, (RED) has raised more than \$350 million to help combat HIV/AIDS, 100 percent of which goes directly to the Global Fund to support programs on the ground. (RED) has partnerships with many leading private sector companies, including: Apple, Bank of America, Coca-Cola, and Starbucks, to name a few. (RED)'s impact will be further amplified in 2016 as the Gates Foundation has agreed to match every dollar raised by (RED), up to \$50 million.

Other areas of recent focus have been procurement reform and the creation of an innovative e-marketplace for the procurement of health commodities. Achieving lower prices for health and medical supplies, as well as speedier delivery to implementing partners, is a key priority for the Global Fund. These initiatives are perhaps two of the most effective ways to achieve long-term savings and stretch critical Global Fund and U.S. dollars. Called Procurement for Impact (P4i), this major initiative of the Global Fund is working to reduce costs through more efficient and effective purchasing and supply chain management. By 2015, the P4i initiative had achieved two-year savings worth more than \$500 million through more effective procurement. Most recently in January 2016, the Global Fund announced a new agreement on the purchase of insecticide-treated mosquito nets to protect against malaria, which is projected to save \$93 million or the equivalent of about 40 million additional nets. This new agreement will use 10 suppliers and includes volume commitments from the Global Fund and performance contracts from the suppliers, which creates a level of certainty for suppliers, allowing them greater visibility and planning time to manufacture and deliver nets.

The e-marketplace, or "wambo.org" as it has recently been named, has been designed to increase the Global Fund's impact and value for money by streamlining procurement operations, optimizing costs, and supporting countries that are transitioning out of Global Fund financing by facilitating continued access to affordable prices for commodities to treat and prevent HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Current projections show that wambo.org has the potential to result in a net savings of approximately \$250 million between 2015 and 2019 and annual projected gross savings of \$125 million from 2019 onward. Other benefits of wambo.org include country ownership, visibility over procurement processes, reduced transaction time and costs, and greater access to market for new and regional suppliers and manufacturers.

Still more efforts have focused on strengthening the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). These include the strengthening of audit methodology, processes and procedures; developing a core training curriculum for OIG staff; reviewing and reorganizing the OIG's IT infrastructure to

increase efficiency and mitigate vulnerabilities; and developing tracking and monitoring processes and tools to enhance accountability for resource and budget utilization. This year, the OIG also launched the *I Speak Out Now!* campaign, a pilot program designed to improve the timeliness and quality of information that the OIG receives, both internally and from external sources, so that it can act more swiftly to disrupt fraud and corruption. The campaign is designed to encourage staff and grant implementers to denounce fraud, abuse and human rights violations in the programs the Global Fund finances.

Lastly, later this year the Global Fund will host its Fifth Replenishment Pledging Conference, where donors will make voluntary pledges and contributions to the Global Fund for the 2017-2019 programmatic cycle. Replenishments occur in three-year cycles to allow for efficient allocation of resources and programmatic planning. For its Fifth Replenishment, the Global Fund is seeking to raise \$13 billion, which would enable the organization to: save up to 8 million lives, leading to a cumulative total of 30-32 million lives saved by 2020; avert up to 300 million new infections across the three diseases; make substantial contributions toward building resilient and sustainable systems for health; support a total of \$41 billion of partners' own domestic investments; support strengthened responses for women and girls, key populations and human rights; and lead to broad economic gains of up to \$290 billion over the coming decades. A strong Replenishment where \$13 billion is pledged from the public and private sectors will further advance our shared goal of ending HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics by 2030.

Once again, thank you for this Subcommittee's commitment to ending HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and epidemics. The United States is the world's moral and financial leader in this fight, and, for this reason, other donors – whether they be countries, corporations, or individuals – closely watch U.S. signals on the Global Fund. Robust U.S. contributions to the Global Fund and global health bilateral programs send a message to the rest of the world. They are a statement of our values, our beliefs, and our commitment to seeing the end of these three diseases as epidemics. It is Friends' sincere hope that Congress will continue to position the United States as the global leader in the fight against these diseases, and we stand ready to work with this Subcommittee and the Congress in making that request a reality.

**Testimony of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Concerning Fiscal Year 2017 Appropriations**

*Submitted for the Record to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on
State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, March 10, 2016*

Submitted by: Benard P. Dreyer, MD, FAAP, President, American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a nonprofit professional organization of 64,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the record in support of federal investments that contribute to healthy and prosperous futures for children, their families and their communities. AAP applauds the U.S. government's leadership in improving maternal and child health around the world and urges Congress to put children first by allocating \$880 million for Maternal and Child Health (MCH) at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), with \$275 million for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; \$230 million for Nutrition; and \$132.5 million for UNICEF in the State Department's International Organizations and Programs account.

The U.S. government has committed to saving the lives of 15 million children and nearly 600,000 women by 2020, as a milestone toward helping to end preventable maternal and child deaths by 2035. The USAID report *Acting on the Call* provides an evidence-based strategy for achieving these results, with low-income countries themselves taking the lead. Since 1990, both the mortality rate and the number of under-five deaths have fallen by more than half. According to *Acting on the Call's* 2015 update, USAID maternal and child survival efforts in particular have resulted in nearly two-and-a-half million more children surviving and 200,000 maternal deaths averted USAID's 24 priority countries since 2008 in. Now that we know what works, we must ensure that lifesaving interventions reach the people who need them. Almost 6 million children died of preventable causes in 2014, and 303,000 women died during pregnancy and childbirth in 2015. In addition, there are about 3 million stillbirths each year.

Nearly half of child deaths—45 percent—occur during the first 28 days of life. This is why AAP has partnered with USAID to implement the Academy's new suite of evidence-based educational training programs designed to reduce neonatal mortality in resource-limited environments, *Helping Babies Survive* (HBS), through the through Survive & Thrive Global Development Alliance (GDA). Survive & Thrive is a partnership between USAID and the private sector, and like all GDAs it requires at least 1:1 leverage (cash and in-kind) of USAID resources from other partners. HBS addresses the leading causes of newborn deaths through promoting early and exclusive breastfeeding (which could save approximately 800,000 children's lives per year); thermal protection (which could avert 20 percent of neonatal deaths caused by preterm birth complications, and possibly avert 10 percent of deaths in full-term or moderately pre-term babies caused by infection¹); clean cord care (for a potential 23 percent reduction in the of risk of neonatal mortality²); and early identification and management of infections (which contribute to almost a quarter of newborn deaths³). In June 2014, the AAP, USAID, and the pediatric associations of Nigeria, India, and Ethiopia announced the "*Helping 100,000 Babies Survive and Thrive*" initiative, which aims to save at least 100,000 newborn lives each year in partnership with the governments of Nigeria, India, and Ethiopia, with funding support from Laerdal Global Health, Johnson & Johnson, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Helping Babies Survive is built on the success of *Helping Babies Breathe* (HBB), a newborn resuscitation program for resource-limited environments, which has been shown to reduce early newborn mortality by nearly 50 percent.⁴ Since 2010 HBB has trained more than 300,000 birth attendants to provide assistance to babies—approximately 10 million globally—who fail to breathe during the first 60 seconds after birth. HBB has been introduced to 77 countries, more than 50 of which have programs coordinated by their national governments.

USAID's contributions to global immunization are critical to reaching its survival and health goals. One in five children, including 22 million infants, do not have access to life-saving vaccines. Their communities often lack resources we take for granted, including the financing to buy vaccines, logistical systems to deliver them and keep them cold, vaccine safety monitoring systems, and a trained health workforce. Since 1988, a coordinated global immunization campaign has reduced the number of polio cases by more than 99 percent, saving more than 13 million children from paralysis and bringing the disease close to eradication. Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, helps low-income countries buy new and underused vaccines. Thanks in large part to U.S. contributions, Gavi plans to immunize an additional 300 million children to save an addition 5 to 6 million additional lives by 2020. UNICEF, another key U.S. partner, procures vaccines for Gavi and buys the vaccines for all global campaigns not covered by Gavi, including for polio, neonatal and maternal tetanus, and measles/rubella. Core MCH funds allow USAID to help countries strengthen logistics systems to transport vaccines safely to clinics where they are needed, budget their own funds for immunization programs, and train health workers to target hard-to-reach and under-immunized populations. Involvement of civil society organizations will be key to ensuring community involvement and access to the fifth child.

AAP also urges Congress to invest appropriately in nutrition. Malnutrition is the underlying cause of 45 percent of all child deaths. In addition, chronic undernutrition caused physical and cognitive stunting in approximately 161 million children in 2013. Nutrition lays the foundation for human health and development, and a growing body of scientific evidence indicates that children who are well-nourished early in life have healthier brain development, stronger immune systems, fewer chronic diseases, and higher IQs. Good nutrition is particularly important to the growth and development of infants and young children during the critical 1,000 days between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday. Leading scientists, health experts, and economists agree that improving nutrition during this critical window is one of the best and most cost-effective investments we can make to achieve lasting progress in global health and development. Among other activities, USAID's Nutrition account supports counseling on optimal breastfeeding. Approximately 800,000 child deaths per year could be prevented if children were breastfed exclusively during their first 6 months of life. Studies show that children who are breastfed have lower rates of mortality, meningitis, asthma and other respiratory illnesses, bacterial and viral infections, ear infections, juvenile diabetes, allergies, obesity, some chronic liver diseases, and some types of cancers. Increasing rates of exclusive breastfeeding is critically important to reducing preventable child deaths and ensuring long-term health, wellbeing, and productivity.

Other programs contribute to maternal and child health as well. According to the Fiscal Year 2016 Congressional Budget Justification, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

(PEPFAR) is strategically realigning its programmatic portfolio to focus on the highest-burden areas and sites. It is expected that this realignment will impact existing projects targeting the maternal and child population, such as the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, as well as PEPFAR integrated services under the Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths umbrella, such as Nutrition and Family Planning. Congress should take this opportunity to evaluate how the State Department and USAID are coordinating to ensure continued service delivery of USAID health programs in areas where PEPFAR resources are being drawn down.

Congress should also request information from USAID on how it will address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which threatens the progress that we have made collectively on the health of women and children in low-income countries and on the ability of economies to maintain their growth. MCH programs already help to ensure that mothers and children who survive can thrive—from skilled birth attendants who can successfully resuscitate babies and reduce preventable newborn death, good nutrition that strengthens immune systems and reduces the risk of chronic disease, and immunizations for polio that can guard against disability caused by irreversible paralysis. USAID has mother opportunities to use its existing platforms to address low-cost, high-impact interventions for NCD risk factors that contribute directly to maternal and child survival, such as smoke-free pregnancies, protection of children from secondhand smoke, support for interventions that impact early brain development, and addressing gestational diabetes.

Adolescents between the ages of 10 and 19 comprise 16 percent⁵ of the world's population and play a critical role in almost all of the U.S. government's health and development targets. Adolescent health highlights the importance of a continuum of care that encompasses reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health. USAID's contributions to family planning and reproductive health not only save the lives of women⁶ and children,⁷ but also help to ensure that adolescent girls can stay in school longer, save more money and contribute more to their economies.

The AAP supports the President's emergency request for response to the Zika virus. Zika is a reminder that infectious diseases can easily cross borders and that global health contributes directly to the health and safety of Americans.

Finally, the AAP urges Congress to help USAID fulfill the promise of the Action Plan on Children in Adversity by ensuring that USAID's Vulnerable Children account is appropriately resourced to ensure that every child has support and access to the conditions for their healthy and safe development, families are supported in their ability to stay together, and children are protected from violence and exploitation. Every child has support and access to the conditions for their healthy and safe development, including the millions of children worldwide who are exposed each year to violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

U.S. activities are amplified when they inspire and galvanize action from the private sector, other donors and partner countries. U.S. global health programs are aligned with the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health 2016-2030, which encourage governments to invest sustainably in their own health systems and is designed to help achieve the new, global Sustainable Development Goal targets.

The AAP appreciates the opportunity to share these observations with the subcommittee. If we may be of further assistance please contact the AAP Department of Federal Affairs at 202-347-8600 or aemmel@aap.org. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Bhutta, Zulfiqar A, et al. "Can available interventions end preventable deaths in mothers, newborn babies, and stillbirths, and at what cost?" *The Lancet*. May 20, 2014. DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(14)60792-3.

² Bhutta, Zulfiqar A, et al. "Can available interventions end preventable deaths in mothers, newborn babies, and stillbirths, and at what cost?" *The Lancet*. May 20, 2014. DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(14)60792-3.

³ Liu, L., Johnson, H. Cousens, S., et al. (2012). Global, regional and national causes of child mortality: an up systematic analysis. *Lancet* 379(9832):2151-61.

⁴ Kak, Lily P., et al. *Helping Babies Breathe: Lessons learned guiding the way forward*. June 7, 2015.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. International Data Base (IDB). "World Midyear Population by Age and Sex for 2015." <http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/broker>.

⁶ Ahmed S., Li QF, Liu L, Tsui A. "Maternal Deaths Averted by Contraceptive Use: An Analysis of 172 Countries." *The Lancet*, 2012, Vol. 380: 111-125.

⁷ Stenberg K, et al. "Advancing Social and Economic Development by Investing in Women's and Children's Health: A New Global Investment Framework." *The Lancet*, 2014, Vol. 383: 1333-1354.

**The Armenian American Community & U.S. Foreign Assistance Policy
for
Fiscal Year 2017
presented by
Raffi Karakashian, Legislative Affairs Director
Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA)**

The Armenian American community requests:

- 1) At least \$5 million in U.S. developmental aid to Nagorno Karabakh, with special focus on expanding the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Center in Stepanakert, a regional clinic serving over 1,000 children and adults with physical and mental disabilities every year.
- 2) Zero-out U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan until its leaders agree with the Royce-Engel peace proposals to withdraw snipers and heavy arms, add OSCE observers, and deploy gunfire locator systems.
- 3) At least \$40 million in U.S. economic assistance to Armenia, targeted to growing the U.S.-Armenia trade and investment relationship.
- 4) At least \$10 million in emergency aid to help Armenia provide transition assistance to the nearly 20,000 people who have fled to Armenia from Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East.
- 5) At least 10% of U.S. assistance to Georgia to be used for job creation programs in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of that country.
- 6) Language strengthening Section 907 restrictions on U.S. aid to Azerbaijan.
- 7) Ending the exclusion of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh from the peace process.

1) At least \$5 million in development assistance for Nagorno Karabakh:

Since FY 1998, direct U.S. aid to Nagorno Karabakh has represented a powerful investment in peace and an enduring expression of America's leadership in supporting a negotiated and democratic resolution of security and status issues related to the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh. This direct aid has met pressing humanitarian needs, providing, most recently, desperately needed clean water to families and the clearance of villages and farmlands of mines and unexploded ordnance. According to the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, the war caused an estimated over \$5 billion in damages. More than twenty years since the cease-fire established in 1994, Karabakh is still suffering from significant infrastructure damage, including the shortage of safe drinking water. In addition, Nagorno Karabakh continues to suffer one of the highest per capita landmine accidents in the world.

We urge the Subcommittee to expand this vital assistance program, to support a needy population that has strived mightily against aggression and blockades to build a strong

democracy, develop a free market economy, and work toward an enduring peace for all the peoples of this region. Since 1991, Nagorno Karabakh has successfully conducted six parliamentary and five presidential elections which have been praised by international observers as free, fair, and transparent.

We specifically encourage the Department of State and USAID to support the expansion and operations of the Lady Cox Rehabilitation Center in Stepanakert, a regional clinic serving over 1,000 children and adults with physical and mental disabilities every year.

2) Suspension of U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan:

The Azerbaijani government of Ilham Aliyev neither needs nor deserves American military aid. It does not serve our national interests or advance our values to provide aid to a military whose leadership frequently threatens to start a new war and regularly launches cross-border attacks not only into Nagorno Karabakh, but also Armenia, a NATO Partnership for Peace country, where border villages are under siege by Azerbaijani sniper fire and artillery.

In addition to threatening to renew full-scale hostilities, President Aliyev refuses U.S. and international calls to pull back snipers and heavy arms, has made land claims on all of Armenia, and openly incites anti-Armenian hatred, including against Americans of Armenian descent. Our State Department warns that not all Americans are safe in Azerbaijan, noting that Americans of Armenian heritage will likely be denied a visa because Azerbaijan cannot guarantee their safety.

As was widely reported in the international media, on August 31, 2012, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev personally pardoned an unrepentant, convicted axe-murderer for killing a NATO Partnership for Peace participant (while he slept) because he was Armenian. Immediately after his pardon, this convicted killer received a promotion in the Azerbaijani military, an apartment, and years of back pay for his prison time. The pardon was condemned around the world, including by President Obama, Members of Congress, the European Parliament, OSCE, Council of Europe, and NATO.

Azerbaijan's regional aggression is closely tied to its pattern of domestic abuse, including its brutal crack-down on dissent. As is well known by this panel, government forces have raided and shut down the offices of U.S.-supported Radio Free Europe, unjustly imprisoned a Radio Free Europe reporter, as well as several other civil society leaders, including Arif and Leyla Yunus, who supported U.S. calls to promote Armenia-Azerbaijan Track II dialogue and have been denied medical care during their pretrial detention. We associate ourselves with the aims of H.R.4246, the Azerbaijani Democracy Act and support the adoption of this legislation.

We respectfully call upon the Subcommittee to suspend the appropriation of Fiscal Year 2017 U.S. military aid to Azerbaijan until its government agrees to pull back snipers and heavy arms, ceases cross-border attacks, ends its threats of renewed war, and agrees to a settlement of regional conflicts through peaceful means alone.

3) At least \$40 million in Assistance to Armenia:

As members of the Subcommittee know, Armenia, a crucial ally in a strategic region of the world, has extended robust support for U.S.-led peace-keeping deployments in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Kosovo, and Mali, and is cooperating with the U.S. on a broad range of regional and security challenges.

At the same time, Armenia, the world's first Christian state and a nation that has survived genocide, continues to face the devastating impact of Turkey and Azerbaijan's dual economic blockades. Our assistance has played a vital role in helping alleviate these blockades (among the longest in modern history) and promoting Armenia's free market system and democratic development. It is for this reason that we ask the Subcommittee to appropriate no less than \$40 million in overall FY17 economic aid (including Economic Support Fund, International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement, and Global Health Programs) for Armenia.

4) Assistance to Christian and other minority communities from Syria:

As has been widely reported, nearly 20,000 individuals from Syria have sought safety in Armenia, a state, which despite being one of the poorest nations accepting Syrian refugees, has received only very modest levels of U.S. and international relief and resettlement assistance. Armenia has generously provided full citizenship rights to many Armenian Syrian refugees, and has sought to compassionately integrate arriving families into Armenian society.

We ask the Subcommittee to appropriate at least \$10 million to help Armenia provide transition support to the nearly 20,000 individuals from Syria who have found safe haven in Armenia.

Within Syria, we remain troubled that distribution gaps in need-based international aid deliveries to Aleppo and elsewhere have resulted in desperately needed food, medicine, and other relief supplies not reaching Armenians, Christian communities, and other at-risk and vulnerable minorities. We ask the Subcommittee to formally call upon the Administration to put in place policies and practices to ensure that need-based aid reaches all at-risk populations in Syria.

5) Assistance to the Javakhk Region in Georgia:

We join with the Congressional Armenian Caucus in encouraging the Subcommittee, as part of a robust U.S. aid package to Georgia, to ensure that 10% of U.S. assistance to Georgia is targeted to the largely Armenian-populated region of Samtskhe-Javakheti (Javakhk) in south-central Georgia, including funding for badly-needed job-creation programs and ongoing improvements to transportation and communication infrastructure.

6) Strengthening Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act:

Enacted in 1992, Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act stands as a statutory expression of U.S. opposition to Azerbaijan's blockades and other aggressive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. Since its enactment, Azerbaijan has not lifted its illegal blockades and has ignored House Appropriations Committee Report language opposing its destabilizing threats. The Congress should limit the President's waiver authority in the face of these provocations by Baku by adding the following certification requirement, effectively narrowing the President's

waiver authority: *"In the last fiscal year, Azerbaijan has not taken hostile action, either through military force or incitement, including but not limited to threatening pronouncements by government officials toward Armenia or Nagorno Karabakh, and has both stated and demonstrated its commitment to pursuing a lasting peace with Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh through solely non-violent means."*

7) Ending the exclusion of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh from the peace process:

The best and most sustainable path to peace requires direct engagement with the people and government of Nagorno Karabakh, whose fate and future are the subject of ongoing talks and whose security will rest on the outcome of these negotiations. As is well known, the Nagorno Karabakh Republic was one of the three parties to the 1994 cease-fire, which ended military hostilities between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan. In its aftermath, Nagorno Karabakh participated in the OSCE Minsk Group peace process as a partner, along with Armenia and Azerbaijan. Since 1998, however, at Baku's insistence, Nagorno Karabakh has been excluded from the peace process. Nagorno Karabakh should, in the interests of peace and common sense, be a full participant in all talks regarding its very future.

In addition to these seven specific priorities, we would like, in closing to add a final thought about the future of the U.S.-Armenia economic relationship. In light of the downward trend in U.S. economic aid to Armenia, we encourage the Subcommittee to encourage the Administration to prioritize bilateral U.S.-Armenia trade and investment promotion. We welcomed last year's signing of a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement and the finalization of the Vorotan hydro-electric power plant deal, the largest ever U.S. investment in Armenia. We look forward to negotiations toward a modern Double Tax Treaty, a long overdue accord that is supported by the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia, the Armenian government, the ANCA, and many corporations operating in both countries, including Microsoft, FedEx, NASDAQ, and Marriott.

The ANCA, as always, thanks you for your leadership and looks forward to working with the Subcommittee to strengthen the U.S.-Armenia alliance and to promote stability in the region.

**STATEMENT OF MARTIN S. RENDON
VICE PRESIDENT, PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY
UNITED STATES FUND FOR UNICEF**

**BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND
RELATED PROGRAMS
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

MARCH 18, 2016

Madam Chairwoman and members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of nearly one million American supporters of the United States Fund for UNICEF, I appreciate this opportunity to submit testimony to you regarding the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). I respectfully ask the Subcommittee to provide \$132.5 million as the U.S. Government's voluntary contribution to UNICEF under the International Organizations and Programs Account for fiscal year 2017. This maintains the contribution of \$132.5 million to UNICEF provided by the U.S. Congress in the fiscal year 2016 Omnibus Appropriations bill.

I commend the bipartisan leadership this Subcommittee has taken to champion programs that help children around the world.

Since its creation in 1946, UNICEF has saved more children's lives than any humanitarian organization in the world. UNICEF staff work on the ground in developing and transitional countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. UNICEF supports prenatal care, child health and nutrition, clean water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and protecting children from violence, exploitation, and HIV/AIDS.

All of UNICEF's funding comes from voluntary contributions from governments, businesses, foundations, and individuals. In fact, 27 percent of UNICEF's total funding comes from non-governmental sources.

As an organization completely funded by voluntary contributions, UNICEF makes sure that its operations are efficient and focused on results where they matter – for vulnerable children around the world. More than 90 per cent of UNICEF's funds support program activities.

Thanks to strong support from the U.S. Congress for UNICEF and for child survival, the number of children dying before age five has dropped by more than half since 1990, from an estimated 12.7 million deaths per year in 1990 to 5.9 million this year. We saw progress even in poorer countries: 24 out of 81 low- and lower-middle income countries cut under-five mortality rates by two thirds or more from 1990 to 2015.

We believe that it is possible to end preventable child deaths globally in a generation, with continued investment in cost-effective, coordinated interventions for children and mothers. UNICEF's efforts around the world implement the compassion of the American people by helping children and families. That is why UNICEF enjoys incredible backing from Americans for its mission of child survival and development, from children participating in "Trick or Treat

for UNICEF” and “Kid Power,” to major corporations donating money and products. That private support is critical to UNICEF’s success in saving children’s lives from measles and cholera, providing access to clean water, helping children stay in school, and thwarting child traffickers trying to exploit vulnerable children.

The U.S. Fund for UNICEF is also proud of its partnerships with the private sector to save children’s lives. Among many examples:

- For 20 years, American Airlines has supported UNICEF’s Change for Good program, raising more than \$10 million in donations of foreign and domestic currency since 1994. Last year American Airlines helped fund nutrition and child health in Haiti, earthquake relief in Nepal, and Ebola response in West Africa.
- The GE Foundation donated \$1.1 million to support innovations in maternal and child health in East Africa, such as technology that enables community health workers to track maternal and child health care.
- The Walt Disney Company provided \$3.8 million through *StarWars: Force for Change* for UNICEF Innovation Labs and Programs, which have helped 1.5 million children in more than a dozen countries.

The U.S. Government’s longstanding and generous support of UNICEF allows it to leverage private sector funding and work with U.S. Government programs to make a real difference in saving children’s lives.

For more than 50 years, UNICEF has been a world leader in immunizations, and is the world’s largest provider of vaccines for developing countries. In 2014, UNICEF supplied vaccines worth nearly \$1.5 billion, providing 2.7 billion doses for children in 100 countries, sufficient for 40 percent of the world’s children; and 819 million syringes. UNICEF is a major partner with the United States in fighting vaccine-preventable diseases, including polio and measles. UNICEF is responsible for procuring vaccines for Gavi, and also buys all vaccines and related items for global campaigns not covered by Gavi. In addition, UNICEF works in-country to ensure that vaccines reach even the poorest children and communities

Malaria remains a major threat to children. UNICEF is one of the largest buyers of mosquito nets in the world, delivering more than 26 million bed-nets to 35 countries in 2014.

Globally, 161 million under-five year olds in 2013 suffered from stunting due to malnutrition. Malnutrition contributes to nearly half of all child deaths. We know that therapeutic foods can help to bring a child back from the verge of starvation. In 2014, UNICEF provided 30,440 tons of therapeutic foods to treat severely malnourished children, and 514 million Vitamin A capsules to prevent Vitamin A deficiency in 50 countries. UNICEF helped 91 countries develop or revise national policies in order to improve nutrition practices.

Kiwanis International, with its more than 600,000 members, partners with UNICEF for *The Eliminate Project*, the current Kiwanis global campaign to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT). This project will protect more than 200 million women and their newborn children from the deadly disease. UNICEF also continues its work with Kiwanis to eliminate iodine deficiency. This partnership has protected 84 million newborns from brain damage caused by iodine deficiency.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative, a partnership led by UNICEF, Rotary International, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and others, has helped reduce polio cases by more than 99 percent since 1988. UNICEF and its partners have immunized more than 2.5 billion children by working with over 200 countries and 20 million volunteers. This is incredible progress and the end of polio is within reach – but we can’t stop now. UNICEF and its partners continue to support massive immunization campaigns to eradicate once and for all this terrible disease. In addition, UNICEF engages with manufacturers to maximize availability and manufacturing capacity, and keeps polio vaccine prices as low as possible.

Education is a critical need for children’s futures, especially for girls: education helps protect girls from exploitation, child marriage, and abuse. An estimated 58 million children of primary school age are out of school globally, and another 63 million adolescents between the ages of 12 to 15 years are not able to receive an education. UNICEF works with countries to identify children out of school, why they are out of school, and what strategies will help these children get into school. For example, in Bolivia’s silver-mining region, many children aged 5 to 14 work in mining rather than attend school. At the Cerro Rico mines in Potosí, UNICEF supports a community school that not only provides children an education, but also keeps them from being put to work in the mines, provides basic hygiene instruction and nutritional support, and materials for the development of artistic talents in music and drawing.

UNICEF’s established presence in developing countries makes it a critical partner for the U.S. Government in responses to major crises. Last year, an estimated 230 million children around the world lived in countries and areas affected by armed conflict, and approximately 60 million children were affected by natural disasters. In 2014, UNICEF responded to nearly 300 humanitarian emergencies in 98 countries, providing children with the shelter, clean water, sanitation, nutrition, health care, and protection they need to survive and recover.

For example, with U.S. Government support, UNICEF provides health, nutrition, water/sanitation, and child protection interventions for the millions of children affected by the violence in Syria, both within Syria and in surrounding countries. In 2015, UNICEF supported the construction of 162 groundwater wells servicing some 2 million people, provided water trucking for 750,000 people, and improved water and sanitation services for 7.3 million people, helping avert a humanitarian catastrophe. UNICEF supported polio campaigns that immunized close to 3 million children under 5 years (surpassing targets), contributing to the prevention of further disease spread. For UNICEF, saving the lives of those children is not enough; UNICEF wants to protect their futures as well. UNICEF is working to ensure that the children of Syria have safe education; protection from exploitation, abuse, and violence; psychological care and support; and opportunities for social cohesion and stability in a volatile region.

Because of its decades-long presence in West Africa, UNICEF was a leading partner for the United States in the battle against the Ebola epidemic. UNICEF is one of the largest suppliers of equipment and supplies for the Ebola response, shipping more than 5,500 metric tons of protective equipment, hygiene and health kits, and other supplies to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. UNICEF worked with faith groups in Liberia and Sierra Leone to provide support to children and families affected by Ebola, and to promote safe burial practices to stem the outbreak. With USAID’s strong support, UNICEF is helping restart education for Ebola-affected children in Liberia.

UNICEF's ability to partner with the U.S. Government, and with important nonprofit partners like Kiwanis, Rotary, the American Red Cross, and Gavi, depends on a strong U.S. contribution to UNICEF, as well as maintaining U.S. support for its bilateral child health programs. In this regard, the U.S. Fund for UNICEF supports the funding requested by our partners for Iodine Deficiency Disorders, Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus, Polio Eradication, and Gavi. Because of the importance of U.S. child survival and health programs, our organization also asks the U.S. Congress to provide \$880 million for the Maternal and Child Health Account and \$230 million for nutrition in fiscal year 2017.

Annual government contributions to UNICEF's regular resources budget constitute the single most important funding source for UNICEF worldwide. The U.S. Government's voluntary contribution to UNICEF's regular resources provides the foundation for UNICEF's work to save children's lives and improve their futures. Resources provided by this Subcommittee are critical to UNICEF's ability to help the United States in international humanitarian crises, conflict areas, and emerging threats to the well-being of children.

Madam Chairwoman, this Subcommittee has long been a champion for the well-being of the world's children, ensuring that children are a priority of U.S. foreign assistance funding. American advocates of UNICEF's work for the world's children salute the bipartisan support this Subcommittee has provided for child survival and for UNICEF. We thank you for working to put children first.

We believe that UNICEF is an indispensable partner of the United States on initiatives to save lives and protect vulnerable children around the world.

We cannot rest on our past successes. Unfortunately, 5.9 million children under five still die every year, mostly from preventable causes; half of those deaths occur in the first week after birth. We believe that number should be zero.

A strong commitment from the United States will strengthen UNICEF's capacity to meet the needs of vulnerable children, in partnership with Americans who care about children everywhere.

I respectfully ask the Subcommittee to provide \$132.5 million under the International Organizations and Programs Account for UNICEF's regular resources for fiscal year 2017.



Outside Witness Testimony for FY2017
Written Statement for the Record

by Adil Baguirov, Ph.D.
Member of the Board of Directors and co-founder, U.S. Turkic Network (USTN)
Washington, D.C.

Before the United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

March 23, 2016

Madam Chairwoman, honorable Ranking Member, honorable members of the Subcommittee,

To summarize U.S. Turkic Network (USTN)'s request in FY2017 aid to the Caucasus and Central Asia regions:

Aid	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Armenia-occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan	Other regional nations
Economic, technical, USAID	Only democracy promotion aid should be earmarked to improve human rights	Per Administration request, or more	Never requested and should always be zero (\$0).	Special aid should also be considered to ethnic Azerbaijanis living in Iran, the Turcomans of Iraq, and the Ahiska (Meskheti) Turks in Russia and Ukraine, the Crimean Tatars in Ukraine and Russia, as well as the Uighurs.
Military	No military aid should be given to Armenia	\$8 million FMF, \$900,000 IMET	Never requested, never allocated, not applicable	Military aid should be provided to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, to help reform their armies and strengthen border security and drug enforcement.

USTN always promotes fair and need-based foreign aid assistance, based on three important criteria:

- 1) allied relationship of the recipient state with the U.S., and,
- 2) the recipient nation must have a demonstrated and certified necessity and need to be able to absorb the aid, and,
- 3) legality of the aid and compliance with U.S. and international laws.

With the current unfortunate events surrounding Ukraine, the occupation of the Crimea region, the crisis in the U.S.-Russia relations, and the blow to the entire system of international law and relations, actions by the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Government in regards to the Armenia-occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, which is the first, biggest and longest-running hotspot in the former Soviet Union, are even more important. Congress cannot ignore the obvious facts – continuing violation of territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan by Armenia allows not just one aggressor government (Armenia) to go free and a victim (Azerbaijan) to suffer, but proliferates more aggressors and victims in the greater region.

Due to the Administration's inattention, and Congress' leadership allowing a handful of pro-Armenia members in both chambers to go contrary to the U.S. policy, U.S. national interests and U.S. and international laws, the blatant violation of international and U.S. laws by Armenia, a military outpost of Russia, through its occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, has persisted over the years.

Adding insult to injury, this handful of members were able, for years, to reward the aggressor, Armenian government, with more aid, while reduce aid to the victim, Azerbaijan.

There is a great imbalance in U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan and Armenia. After all, Azerbaijan is almost three times the size and population, and has a several times larger the size of refugee/IDP population. In reality, because Armenia militarily occupies some 16% of Azerbaijan and thus commits action in violation of the territorial integrity or national sovereignty of another Independent State of the former Soviet Union, such as violations included in the Helsinki Final Act, per Section 7070 of the FY2012 Conference Report and other relevant U.S. laws, then probably none of the previously appropriated or funds under consideration shall be made available for assistance to Armenia. Ideally, there should be no aid to Armenia (except for democracy-building and promotion of human rights) and at least as much for Azerbaijan as what the Administration will request, but there certainly is a need for more to help Azerbaijani IDPs, promote far greater education and cultural exchanges.

Also, USTN requests to **not** include **any** direct assistance for the Armenia-occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan in FY2017.

Furthermore, USTN feels that based on prior actuals, real absorption capacity and Pentagon's own assessments (and not the wishes of a special interest group), there should be at least \$600,000 in International Military Education and Training (IMET) aid accompanied by at least \$1.7 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for Azerbaijan, while since Armenia's army is occupying parts of Azerbaijan in violation of U.S. and international law, there should

not be FMF or IMET aid to Armenian armed forces at all. The so-called “military parity” is not required and meaningless, considering how small the U.S. aid is compared to the overall defense budgets of the two nations, and how different states have different needs, and U.S. national security interests. For example, Armenia spends over \$450 million on arms every year – which is 4.2% of its GDP according to SIPRI’s 2010 figures (in comparison, Azerbaijan spends only 2.9% of its GDP on defense, according to SIPRI’s 2010 figures).

According to then-U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Evans, “The Ministry of Defense [of Armenia] also typically benefits from supplemental spending bills throughout the year as well as off-budget expenditures.” He continues: “Because there is no effective independent oversight of these expenditures, it is widely suspected that senior Ministry of Defense officials take advantage of these off-budget funds for personal use.”

According to a report released in 2015 by a German-government-financed think-tank, the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), Armenia ranks third (3rd) as the world's most militarized country relative to population and size of economy. In 2014 it was fourth in the world, so more recent "achievement" is not surprising. While U.S. taxpayers' money is wasted by the members of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, by bankrolling Armenia, its government, which hosts thousands of Russian troops in its several military bases, is free to spend more on militarization, and thus terrorize its neighbors more.

In fact BICC's Global Militarisation Index 2014 shows that Armenia, a nation of around two million, is the European continent's most militarized nation. Who is it militarizing itself against? It already occupies 16% of Azerbaijan, whilst making unfriendly actions against its other pro-Western neighbors, Georgia and Turkey. Armenia has 17.9 soldiers and paramilitaries per 1,000 inhabitants, more than any of its neighbors. Even Russia, with an economy and population that dwarfs Armenia, finished in fifth place - after Syria, which is fourth.

Otherwise, all of the U.S. taxpayers' money provided to the regime in Armenia is being wasted. While U.S. is spending millions on "demining" Armenia-occupied Azerbaijani territories, the Minister of Defense of Armenia, Seyran Ohanyan, declared on July 17, 2014 that he will have every possible road and path that connects the Armenia-occupied Karabakh region to the rest of Azerbaijan heavily mined. Thus, a minister of defense of another country (Armenia) is openly admitting illegal actions on foreign territory (Azerbaijan), and completely spits in the face of U.S. taxpayers from whom he and his criminal government beg for more aid every year. Why provide them with any military aid?

Armenia has taken new Azerbaijani hostages in July 2014, and after killing one, is still holding two of them. The three Azerbaijani citizens who were illegally taken hostage by Armenia are: Shahbaz Guliyev and Dilgam Askerov.

The third hostage, Hasan Hasanov was killed by Armenian soldiers on July 11, 2014, but his body was handed over to the Azerbaijani side only on October 2, 2014 with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Two other hostages - Shahbaz Guliyev and Dilgam Askerov were accused of fictitious sabotage and illegally imprisoned by the Armenian army in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

These Azerbaijani civilians were taken hostage within internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Several U.S. officials, such as Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs at the United States Department of State (DoS), Ambassador James Warlick of the DoS, and most recently by the DoS spokesperson Jen Psaki. However, Armenian president and government have refused to do so. This is the same Armenian president who was nearly sanctioned by the U.S. government just a few years ago, who killed the largest number of peaceful protesters even by Soviet standards, and who boasted of his role in the largest war crime in all of Europe in 1992 - the Khojaly Massacre (which has been recognized by some 15 U.S. states as well as several countries).

NO DIRECT AID TO NAGORNO KARABAKH SHOULD BE PERMITTED

Direct aid to the Armenia-occupied Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan obviously **causes irritation and protests on the part of both Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani-Americans, and spoils the relations between allies significantly. There was never any direct aid requested for Nagorno-Karabakh in either FY2016 or FY2015, or previously, by any of the U.S. Administrations.**

Any direct aid to the Armenia-occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan goes to the military junta, led by the Armed Forces of Armenia, which illegally occupies this Azerbaijani region. This harms the U.S. national interests, its international and regional standing and prestige, and its appearance of an honest, neutral broker in the mediation between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

U.S. is the only country in the world to allocate aid directly to the occupied region, bypassing central authorities in Baku. U.S. does not give any direct aid to similar post-Soviet conflict zones such as Crimea (Ukraine), Abkhazia (Georgia), South Ossetia (Georgia) and Transdnistria (Moldova), not to mention many other similar regions around the world, such as Chechnya in Russia in the 1990s and 2000s, just to name a few - then why should Congress provide any direct aid to the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region? Just because some ethnic lobby wants it?

Aside from this action sending the wrong message symbolically, this aid **free up funds for the Armenian armed forces to continuing illegal occupation of 16% of Azerbaijan, buying arms, as well as serving as a black hole for narcotics and drug trade, arms smuggling** (there is a 132 km border with Iran), diamond and precious metals trade, etc. Hence, it is absolutely essential that there is no allocation of direct U.S. aid to the occupied Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan starting this year.

It has been reported, established and certified many times by the U.S. Government (e.g., the State Department - see <http://Karabakh.UZAzeris.org> for a detailed fact sheet), that Armenia occupies Azerbaijan and thus violates the latter's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and it is thus ineligible for any U.S. aid.

CONCLUSION

USTN makes the following requests for Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as other regional nations:

Armenia – there should be no aid except for democracy and human rights promotion. At the same time there should be absolutely no military aid (FMF/IMET) to the Armenian government for as long as its policy of ethnic cleansing, aggression and occupation persists.

Azerbaijan – follow Administration’s request or provide more; and provide at least \$1.7 million for FMF, and at least \$600,000 IMET aid.

Armenia-occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan – there should be zero in direct aid. Any direct aid to that occupied region is illegal and immoral.

Regarding other countries in the greater region, special aid should also be considered to ethnic Azerbaijanis living in Iran, the Turcomans of Iraq, and the Ahiska (Meskheti) Turks in Russia and Ukraine, and the Crimean Tatars in Ukraine and Russia, as well as for the Uighurs.

Military (IMET and FMF) aid should be provided to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to help them reform their armies, strengthen international cooperation, improve border protection and drug enforcement.